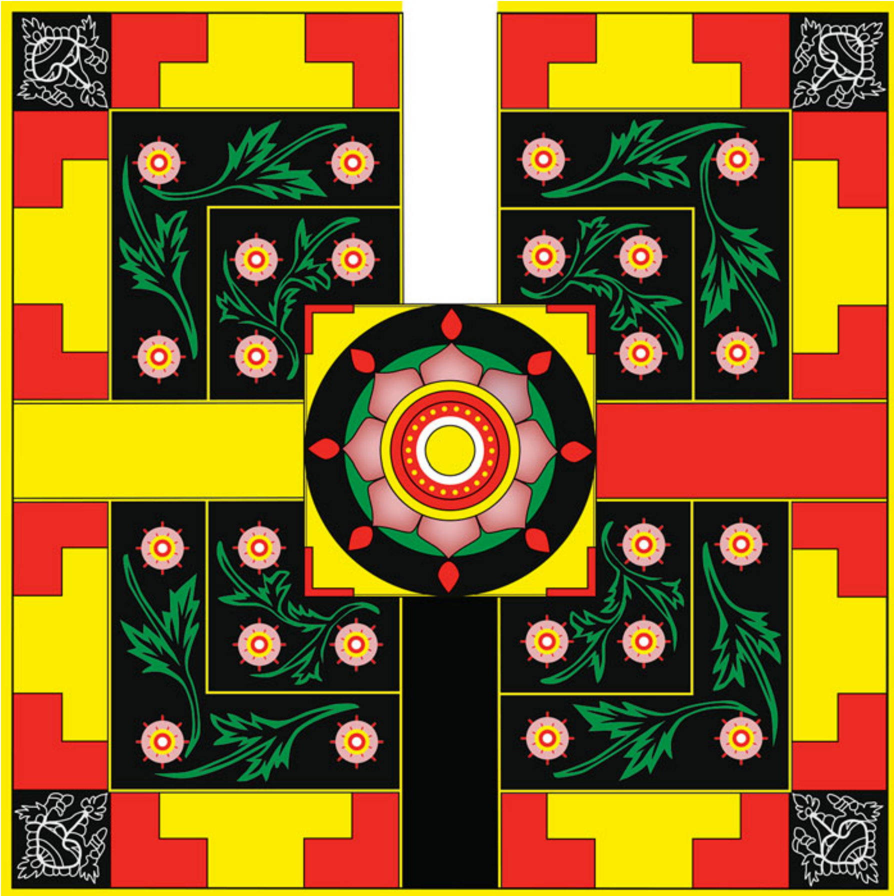
The Body of God

An Emperor's Palace for Krishna in Eighth-Century Kanchipuram



D. Dennis Hudson

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The chakrabja mandala: “Mandala of the Wheel and Lotus.” Drawn by Case and Sandgren from an unidentified edition of the *Padma-samhita*.

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D. DENNIS HUDSON

Edited by
Margaret H. Case

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Printed in the United States of America
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To my families
in the United States and India

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Editor's Note

Dennis Hudson writes in his Introduction that he first began to study the Vaikuntha Perumal temple in Kanchipuram in 1979, and first visited it in 1983. It must have been in that period that I met him—as South Asian editor at Princeton University Press at that time, I sought out scholars whose work might eventually be published at the Press. I recall walking with him on a sunny path and his saying it would be a few years before he would be ready to submit a book to a publisher. I am sure that neither of us imagined it would be about twenty-five years.

In the meantime, I occasionally kept in touch with Dennis. I left Princeton University Press in 1992 and began spending time in the Vaishnava town of Vrindaban, India. In these years I came into more frequent contact with him, as we sometimes attended the same conferences and once were on the same plane from Delhi to New York. In the spring of 2003 he sent me seven chapters of his book on the temple, asking me to edit it and saying that the eighth chapter, the last on the middle floor of the sanctum, would follow at the end of the summer. I did read the manuscript, found very little to change or suggest, and put it on a shelf. At the end of the summer, he said he had agreed to write a "Guidebook" to the temple for publication in Chennai, and that it should take him no more than a year or so—after which he would resume work on the larger manuscript.

After that, I wrote or talked to him few times about the book, now called *The Body of God*, and heard his various reasons for not finishing it: his continuing work on the "Guidebook" and his preoccupation with family. I did not know that he had been diagnosed with

prostate cancer and found this out only in the spring of 2006, after he had been struggling with the illness for over ten years. John S. (Jack) Hawley at Barnard College and I talked that spring and summer about our wish to help him any way we could. Then in early October, I had a call from the historian Romila Thapar, who was visiting Dennis in Northampton for the weekend. She said that Dennis was no longer receiving treatment, was in hospice care, and probably could not work much longer. She said he would be glad if I were willing to help with the book. Jack and I drove to Northampton the following weekend, and we all agreed that I would put *The Body of God* together, while Jack would collect and edit a volume of Dennis's essays.

In assembling the book, the materials I worked with were the manuscript text of the "Guidebook," *The Vaikuntha Perumal Temple, Kanchipuram: Interpreted by D. Dennis Hudson,* which was in press in India, and a manuscript of *The Body of God* that included chapters on the whole temple. He had not considered it finished, he said, because there were always more connections that he became aware of, other paths he wanted to explore. The "Guidebook" had grown to over four hundred pages, and the other manuscript was quite a bit longer. There was overlap, of course, but Dennis's line of thought had changed as he worked, and the two manuscripts were organized differently. The approach we agreed on was to use the "Guidebook" (which we now called the "core text") as the framework, and add to it material from the longer work—as well as notes and diacritics, which were missing from the core text. Dennis was still able to work two or three hours most days, and he read through the larger text, marking sections that he wanted to include. Back home, I set to work as hard as I could to put it all together while he would still know that it was happening.

I made two more trips to Northampton for long weekends, and Jack joined us for a day or two each trip. I felt privileged to be briefly a part of Dennis and Lori's warm and vibrant household and extended family, all of whom were enormously supportive of this undertaking. The fall weather was mild, and we sat in or looked out on the garden as we talked and read manuscripts. The garden faded each week, and it was hard to see Dennis growing weaker as well. But as we talked, and Jack and I asked him questions, he seemed to draw on a deep reserve. It was clear that his wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of the temple and of Bhagavata religion were part of his core of life and strength. Despite the dire circumstances, I found these trips—and the manuscript itself—profoundly energizing.

Before Thanksgiving I was able to tell Dennis and his family that "we have a book"—it was cobbled together and had a shape, although much remained to be done. We were all relieved that Dennis's lifetime of involvement with the temple would in fact result in a book. About three weeks later, Dennis died. I heard that at the end he was clearly going through the temple in his mind's eye.

The present text, the result of several more weeks of concentrated effort, now includes virtually everything Dennis had marked, as well as some other material from the larger manuscript that I thought should not be lost. Two sections were left out: a meditation on the meaning of Krishna's many wives, and a study of the depiction of the *Devi Mahatmyam* at Mamallapuram. We hope to publish these elsewhere. Four indigestible but relevant pieces were assigned to Appendixes. Dennis intended to write a conclusion, "The Pancharatra Agama, Bhagavata Dharma, and the *Bhagavata Purana*." This was never written, so we are left to draw the conclusions ourselves, taking our cues from the interconnections he so abundantly suggests.

Dennis's writing was fluid, uncluttered, and approachable, and his attention to the details of bibliography and annotation was remarkable. The usual "housekeeping" chores of a copyeditor were virtually unnecessary. He complained that toward the end he suffered from confusion, and it is likely that some of his textual citations have become corrupted. He had put off introducing diacritics, which existed only here and there in the texts as I had them. We agreed that they should appear not in the body of the book but rather in a glossary, and much of my effort had been to construct this. Diacritics also appear in the bibliography.

Acknowledgments

Dennis Hudson was unable to compile his acknowledgments for this volume, though he was always generous in thanking the many people who helped him. He did record his thanks in the Indian publication, *The Vaikuntha Perumal Temple, Kanchipuram,* which provides the structure and much of the writing for this volume. That is reprinted here, with minor editing:

"It's impossible to acknowledge all the help with this study I've received over the years, beginning in 1979 with Marylin M. Rhie at Smith College. Doris Meth Srinivasan introduced me to the American Council on South Asian Art and its scholarly world of art historians. Thanks to her support I received a fellowship for college teachers and independent scholars from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and during 1988–1989, with the long-suffering support of my family, I was free to work full time in 'decoding' the temple. This 'decoding' was further honed by invaluable critical responses received through lectures and talks at various forums. These include the annual workshops of the Committee on Religion in South India, meetings of the South Asian section of the American Academy of Religion, and meetings of the American Council on South Asian Art, and in classes on bhakti taught by John B. Carman at Harvard Divinity School. Steven J. Rosen opened his *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* to various papers I wrote introducing the temple,

summarizing my developing interpretation, and discussing what I see as this temple's implications for the history of Krishna worship in India. John S. Hawley carried this discussion to a climax in 2002 through a symposium he organized at Barnard College and the Southern Asian Institute of Columbia University, resulting in the *JVS* issue of Fall 2002 (vol. 11, no. 1).

"In India, Dr. K. V. Raman, retired from the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Madras, read my early writings on the temple. His eager and continuing vote of confidence in my approach to the study of this archaeological monument he knows well has been indispensable to my continuing despite many delays. . . . The guidebook version of my study would not exist except that Ranvir Shah and his colleague V. R. Devika of the Prakriti Foundation suggested it, and with patient enthusiasm nudged me gently to its completion. They brought on Subhashree Krishnaswamy to edit it for a nonacademic audience, and Sathya Seelan to photograph it professionally.

"For critical readings of the text in its various stages I am indebted to the early guidance of my friend John Bollard, a Celticist and editor. And to my friend John Hellwig, a professor of theater delighting in South and Southeast Asian lore and performance, whose critical responses brought clarity to my later crafting of this [work]. Finally, there are my 'cheerleaders' on the sidelines these many years, growing ever more enthusiastic: David Hudson, Megan Hudson, Jake Hudson, Alexa Hudson, and Anil Pillay. Yet, for enthusiastic support, for patience, and for generous self-sacrifice over the course of these years there is no one I am more indebted to than my wife, my friend, and my spiritual companion, Lori Divine Hudson."

In bringing this volume together after Dennis's death, I very much missed his help in answering questions and filling in blanks. Many scholars were generous in addressing my questions: Vidya Dehajia, Jack Hawley, Steven Hopkins, Katherine Kasdorf, Timothy Lubin, Anna Seastrand, H. Daniel Smith, Travis Smith, and Donald Stadtner. Jack Hawley and David Mellins devoted many hours to correcting and amplifying the Sanskrit diacritics; and D. Samuel Sudanandha and Ravi Sriramachandran kindly vetted the Tamil diacritics. Dr. Sudanandha also copied the poem in Appenxix 5 onto a disk. Without their help, the glossary would have been impossible, and even with it I fear that others will find mistakes, for which I of course bear responsibility. The diagrams were drafted by my son Nat Case and his assistant Chris Sandgren of Hedberg Maps, Minneapolis. The photographs are those that appear in the Indian publication; the list of illustrations below record the photographers and sources as far as these could be determined.

At Oxford University Press, Cynthia Read encouraged Dennis for many years, and for her unflagging support for this project, as for so many works of South Asian scholarship, many of us are very grateful. Linda Donnelly, the production editor, has as always been a pleasure to work with.

We are grateful to Molly A. Daniels-Ramanujan for permision to reprint the translations by A. K. Ramanujan that grace Dennis's discussion.

Above all, I am indebted to Dennis's family, especially Lori Divine Hudson and Jake Hudson, and to my husband Marston, for their support and encouragement in this enterprise, which has been as rewarding as it has been arduous.

Contents

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Illustrations

Sources for Illustrations

AIIS: American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi.
Case and Sandgren: Nat Case and Chris Sandgren, Hedberg Maps, Minneapolis.
Hudson: Private collection of Dennis Hudson, Northampton, Mass.
IFDI: Institut Française d'Indologie, Pondicherry.
Ramesh 1993: M. S. Ramesh, *108 Vaishnavite Divya Desams*. Volume One, plate 28: *Divya Desams in Tondai Nadu*. Tirupati: M. V S. Prasad, Executive Officer, T. T. Devasthanams, 1993.
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Sathya Seelan: Private collection of Ranvir Shah and the Prakriti Foundation, Chennai.

Figures

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Abbreviations

AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
AS	*Ahirbudhnya saṁhitā*
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
BP	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
BU	*Brihadaranyaka Upaniṣad*
CU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
DM	*Devī Māhātmyamam*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
EITA	*Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
JS	*Jayakhyā saṁhitā*
Mbh	*Mahābhārata*
MP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Upaniṣad*
PS	*Pādma-saṁhitā*
PT	*Periya Tirumoḻi*
RV	*Ṛg Veda*
SB	*Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SII	*South Indian Inscriptions*
SS	*Satvata-saṁhitā*
TU	*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*
TVM	*Tiruvāymoḻi*

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The Body of God

I am . . . at bottom ignorant of all this and even somewhat fearful. . . . But so is the way and the spirit of story-telling which I embody that all it tells of, it pretends to have experienced and to be at home in it.

—Thomas Mann, *The Holy Sinner*

Introduction: The Discovery

This study began at Smith College in 1979 when Marylin Martin Rhie, in the Department of Art, and I, in the Department of Religion, decided to teach a course on "Hindu Gods in Text and Image." We planned to correlate specific religious sculptures and buildings in India with texts, matching them chronologically as closely as possible to see what would emerge. For the Pallava period in the south (ca. 400–900), Rhie suggested we look at two relatively untouched temples in the Pallava capital of Kanchipuram.

One temple is the "Temple of Rajasimha, the Lord" (*rajasimheshvara koyil*), commonly known today as the Kailasanatha Temple. Its builder, Narasimhavarman Rajasimha, who ruled ca. 680–720, was a devotee of Shiva, had been consecrated as a Maheshvara, and followed the path of Shaiva Siddhanta. His magnificent temple is dated ca. 720. The other temple, built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla (ca. 731–796), is the "Emperor's Vishnu-house," which in Tamil is *paramecchuravinnagaram* and in Sanskrit is *vishnugriha*. This elegant temple is known today as the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple, and on stylistic grounds Rhie dates it to ca. 770–775.

Since I had been working on Tamil poems composed in the eighth and ninth centuries by the Bhagavata poet-saints known as Alvars, I opted for Pallavamalla's "Emperor's Vishnu-house." I searched through the canon of Alvar poems known as the "Four Thousand Divine Stanzas" (*nalayira-divya-prabandha*) to find a poem written about it. I found only one, by a poet who "signs" his name as Kalikanri, but is better known as Tirumangai Alvar. The poem appears in his large anthology called *Periya Tirumoli* (2.9). Tirumangai

composed the poem sometime between the completion of the Vishnu-house ca. 770 and Nandivarman's death in 795–796, perhaps ca. 790. He wrote other poems about Nandivarman's liturgical acts, and in this one portrays him as still on the throne after an already lengthy reign. In the sixty-first year of his rule (792–793), Nandivarman responded to Tirumangai's repeated requests and gave land to sixteen Brahmins to form a village.[1] Perhaps the poet thanked him with this poem. We shall discuss Tirumangai further in chapter 3.

The poem is untitled and consists of ten four-line stanzas, nine of which follow a thematic pattern divided between two pairs of lines. The tenth stanza inverts the pattern; it is the stanza in which the poet "signs" his name and records the beneficial results of reciting it devoutly (the *phala shruti*). It was this thematic pattern that immediately caught my attention: God is the subject of the first two lines, and Nandivarman as God's servant is the subject of the second two lines. This closely resembles the architectural arrangement of the Vishnu-house the poem celebrates.

The Emperor's Vishnu-house is not huge by later temple standards, but is impressive (Figure I.1). In contrast to Rajasimha's open courtyard surrounding a mountainous palace for his Master, Nandivarman built his Master's residence as a three-dimensional mandala one enters and moves through. The tall prakara wall establishing the mandala's boundaries is about eighty-seven feet north to south and about one hundred eight feet west to east (Figure I.2). The west-facing vimana palace enclosed by it is about forty-seven feet square at the



FIGURE I.1. The Paramecchuravinnagaram in 1909. From Rea 1909.

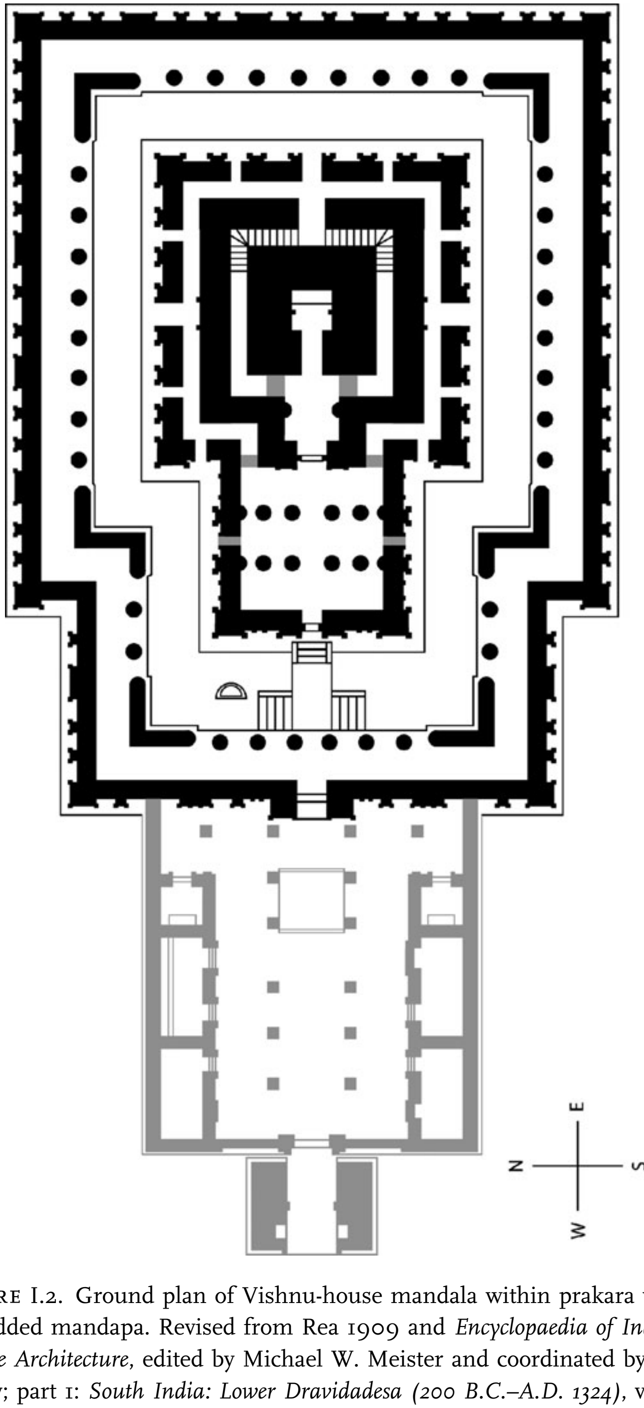


FIGURE I.2. Ground plan of Vishnu-house mandala within prakara wall, and added mandapa. Revised from Rea 1909 and *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture,* edited by Michael W. Meister and coordinated by M. A. Dhaky; part 1: *South India: Lower Dravidadesa (200 B.C.–A.D. 1324),* vol. 1, Text (New Delhi and Philadelphia: American Institute of Indian Studies and University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), figure 45, p. 69.

base. This square is the mandala's center. At first it appears distorted because the major portion of its western side extends westward to form a porch.[2] When this porch is conceptually collapsed back into the western side, however, the center as a square emerges clearly.

A mandala may be drawn on a flat surface and erased afterward. Examples are the kolam, an ornamental figure drawn with powder each morning at the entrance of homes, and the mandala similarly drawn on an altar to serve as the residence of devas during rituals prescribed by the agamas. But a mandala can also be a permanent three-dimensional structure like the Emperor's Vishnu-house. A devotee can walk around it, walk into it, and walk up and down it.

Devotees in Nandivarman's day who knew the *Bhagavata Purana* would recognize this scripture in the fifty-six sculpted panels on the vimana and its porch. Originally the Vishnu-house was painted, and one can only imagine today how dazzling it must have been, for it was meant to transform the consciousness of devout and learned viewers. It was designed and painted to seize their six senses of touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, and thought, and then focus them on Deva or God, who is the subject of every spoken word and material form.

The only entrance into the Emperor's Vishnu-house mandala is through the western gateway of the enclosing prakara wall. Once inside, viewers stand inside a compact and bounded realm where the perspective is at all times partial, shifting, and intimate. The Emperor's Vishnu-house is the entire mandala arena defined by the enclosing prakara, but God is believed to live at its center. He does so in two ways: the vimana palace is His body; and He lives inside the vimana as three black stone icons. God's body as palace has three stories (*tritala-vimana*) (Figure I.3). On each story there is a sanctum (*garbhagriha*) housing God's body as icon in a specific posture. In the bottom floor sanctum He sits. In the middle floor sanctum He reclines. In the top floor sanctum He stands. These three iconic bodies and postures dwelling inside a palace that itself is a body alerts us to the fact that we are probing a realm of mystery. The Emperor's Vishnu-house is composed of stones, and these stones address Bhagavatas of considerable learning and sophistication in the capital of a powerful empire, which by this time has had its hand in Southeast Asian commerce and politics for generations. How these stones address the wealthy and sophisticated Bhagavatas of the Pallava capital and court, some of whom may have spent time in Sumatra, Java, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, is the subject of this study. But this realm's mystery will remain a vision (*darshana*) words cannot encompass or explain, because it is the perception of God.

In the ground plan of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple arena shown in Figure I.2, the original Parameccuravinnagaram Mandala is enclosed by the thickly shaded boundary depicting the prakara wall. A hall (*mandapa*) and a porch (*ardhamandapa*) have been added as an entrance leading to the prakara's

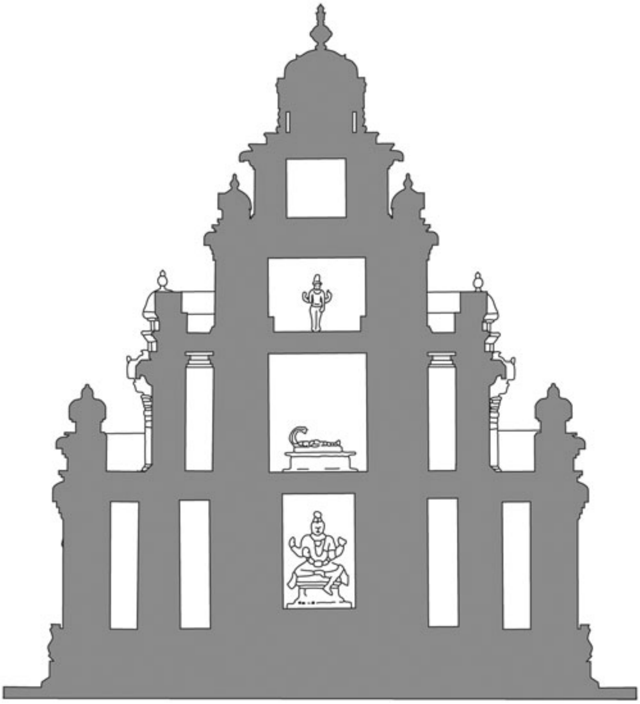


FIGURE I.3. Three sanctums on three floors facing west. Based on Rea 1909.

gateway on the western side. Inside the prakara is a covered walkway running along all four sides, which displays the history of the entire Pallava Dynasty. Next to it at a lower level is a drainage moat that surrounds the vimana palace to capture rainwater falling from it (Figure I.4). Steps on the bridge leading from the covered walkway to the vimana's porch descend into it so that when it is dry devotees may use it as a pathway for circumambulating the base of the vimana. If the moat were plugged, however, this drainage would be like a moat surrounding a palace, or an ocean surrounding a mountain. The latter appears to be its original meaning. At the center stands the vimana's square base; the central portion of the western side has been pulled to the west to form a porch (Figure I.2).

The mandala of the Emperor's Vishnu-house thus falls into two parts divided by the drainage pathway, moat, or "ocean." The three-story palace stands at the center as God's body with fifty-six sculpted panels on its exterior surface. The enclosing prakara walkway portrays ruling Pallavas facing God's body as His servants; most prominently displayed is Nandivarman. Tirumangai's poem follows a similar thematic structure. The first two lines of each stanza focus on the iconic presence of God residing in the Vishnu-house, and the second two lines focus on Nandivarman as His servant. Both building



FIGURE I.4. Moat facing northeast with vimana to the left, covered walkway to the right, and bridge on the eastern side without descending steps. Source unidentified.

and poem draw attention first to deity and then to ruler, and this bipartite structure is new in the eighth century.

Nandivarman's predecessor Rajasimha built the "Shore Temple" at Mamallapuram and had small panels carved inside its prakara, but they are badly worn, few in number, and difficult to interpret. The sequence of historical panels Nandivarman carved, however, is unprecedented in the vitality of its details, and in its function as a visual record of a dynasty's history. Similarly, none of Tirumangai's many other poems gives such a balanced attention to deity and ruler, or to historical details found in written records of the time. This striking parallelism of temple and poem gives rise to the questions that produced this study: Did Tirumangai record the organization of the Emperor's Vishnu-house in the structure of his poem? If so, did he record its meanings as intended by its designers? Does his poem verbally reproduce the Paramecchuravinnagaram we now know as the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple?

Once asked, these questions would not go away. Marylin Rhie and I taught the course together a few times and I came back to the questions as time allowed. Initially, the most intriguing and problematic aspect of the temple's organization was the significance of the difference in posture of the three icons placed in sanctums arranged vertically and hidden from view inside the vimana. Other Vishnu-houses with three floors were constructed later with icons in the same postures, but they were arranged in differing sequences. None of them, moreover, faced west as the Emperor's Vishnu-house does. This raises another question: What difference does the temple's west-facing orientation make to its intended meaning?

To answer these questions, I turned to the early reports on the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple by Alexander Rea and worked through C. Minakshi's careful

analysis of its sculpted dynastic history. I studied in the histories of India's art, and read T. Goudriaan on the Vaikhanasa Agama and H. Daniel Smith and Sanjukta Gupta on the Pancharatra Agama. I explored the history of the Pallavas and of the capital Kanchipuram, read the poems of the Alvars connected to the realm (Pey, Poykai, Putam, and Tirumangai), puzzled over Pallava texts inscribed on stone and copper, and read the historical studies of T. V. Mahalingam and others. Eventually I realized three things. First, with the exception of C. Minakshi no one knew much about the Emperor's Vishnu-house, and few had given it sustained attention. Second, some older assumptions and judgments about India's religious history needed to be reexamined. And third, little was known about the way liturgies for the worship of icons had shaped the design of the buildings in which they were housed, or about the change from one liturgical system to another in the same temple.

Thus far the study had been entirely out of books. In 1983, however, I was in Chennai (then Madras) researching another topic and went to visit the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram with my wife, Lori Divine. I took the poem and she took her camera. The temple was then, as it is now, under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India, yet worship continues there and we met the priest who led it. He was the late M. R. Sundaravarada Bhattachari (or Sundaravaratha Pattachari). When I explained in my inadequate Tamil that I thought Tirumangai had come there and recorded the specific meaning of the temple in his poem, Sundaravarda Bhattachari's enthusiastic response told me that I could not let the question drop.

He knew Tirumangai's poem about his temple by memory and recited it as he led us around the vimana. He took us from the bottom floor to the middle floor, animatedly explaining the correspondences he saw between poem and building. I did not understand well everything he said, but I did understand from his explanations that the poem does in fact record the icons according to the sequence of their three postures moving from the bottom sanctum upward.

Sundaravarda Bhattachari's enthusiastic graciousness toward my efforts to understand his Vaikuntha Perumal Temple did not wane, nor has that of his son S. Devanathan Bhattachari, who has replaced his father as officiating priest. This is not to say, however, that he or his son would agree with all I say about it. Much of what he said at our first meeting revealed meanings in the poem that I had not seen, and each time I visited the temple his explanations revealed more about the building. Yet some of his modes of interpretation differ from the historical and critical methodology I have followed. As one example, his family follows the Vaikhanasa Agama, but I argue that it was designed according to the Pancharatra Agama. As another, he would use details to hang the meaning of an entire sculpted scene from what seemed to me to be a very slender thread. Our approaches to his temple were very different. He was Vaikuntha Perumal's hereditary servant and voiced the oral knowledge

of a worldview accepted as received. I was a scholar seeking knowledge from a stance that questions all worldviews, including the one it has received.

Due to the groundbreaking scholarship of H. Daniel Smith, I have long suspected that the liturgical basis for the worship of God as Krishna in southern India is the Pancharatra Agama, and that it underlies the poems of the Alvars. The Emperor's Vishnu-house appeared to me to confirm this hypothesis. The first sculpted figure met in the clockwise (*pradakshina*) circumambulation of the bottom sanctum, for example, is an enthroned Snake facing north sitting casually in a state of mild inebriation. In the Pancharatra system, this Snake corresponds to the Plower (*samkarshana*) formation (*vyuha*), the first of three God makes to transform himself into the universe and to act within it. This single yet highly significant correlation of theology and sculpted program at the sacred center of the mandala confirmed other evidence I observed. I therefore looked to the Pancharatra Agama to find the liturgical basis for the temple's design.

Some of the fifty-six sculpted panels on the vimana and its porch have been damaged by the weather, and important details have been clarified, interpreted, obscured, or even erased by restorations, most recently in 1998. Many panels were opaque to me, but the meaning of some was obvious. Among these are the depictions of Gajendra being saved from the "grasper" (*graha*), of the Churning of the Milk Ocean, of Man-lion grasping and disemboweling Hiranyakashipu (Golden Clothes), of Krishna dancing on Kaliya, of the Dwarf as Trivikrama, and of Madhusudana about to slay Madhu and Kaitabha. I assumed that the vimana's designers had placed the panels with a coherent program in mind, but I had no idea what it was, and did not want to rely on guesses. The panels that I did recognize, however, gave me a place to begin, and so I turned to their narratives as found in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and in the collections of "ancient lore" (*purana*) common to devotees of Krishna.

Among the latter, I gave special attention to the *Shrimad Bhagavata Purana*. It is the most influential of these puranas; and at the time most scholars agreed that it appeared in southern India sometime between the eighth and tenth centuries and is in some way connected to the poems of the Alvars. I also studied the Alvar poems with the temple in mind, returning again with special attention to those poems associated with Kanchipuram. For accurate reference, I began to make a detailed description of each panel based on personal observations and on the photographs of others.

A leave from teaching sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1988–1989 allowed me to focus on this study, and I was led to a hermeneutic breakthrough. Careful reading of the stories in the *Bhagavata Purana*, especially the prayers, revealed that it was more intimately connected to the Pancharatra Agama than I had thought. Moreover, as I read the stories that explained the sculpted panels whose subjects I recognized, the details of

the panels in turn taught me how to read the stories. Sculpted texts and written texts were interpreting one another. At times the detailed correspondence between *Bhagavata Purama* narratives and prayers and their sculpted depictions astonished me.

I began to see that the designers of the vimana had used a specific episode to encode an interpretation of the entire story, and that a story often begins and ends in places I had never noted. Some of the stories refer to other stories, and as I read those stories in the *Bhagavata Purana*, some of them explained panels on the vimana I had previously found opaque. In some cases, the newly decoded panels were nearby on the same wall, or were in a corresponding place on an opposite wall. Their locations were pointing me toward a systematic program of sculptures expressing the meanings of the vimana's four sides, and a pattern of thought was beginning to emerge. I did not yet fully understand this pattern, but the sculptural program obviously corresponded to the Pancharatra theology of God's four vyuha formations.

This evidence finally persuaded me to formulate a working hypothesis: the sculpted program of the vimana and porch document a single yet complex religious vision consistent with the *Bhagavad-gita*, the *Bhagavata Purana*, the Pancharatra Agama, and the poems of the Alvars. To test it I decided to see if, on the basis of these materials alone, I could plausibly explain the vimana's entire sculpted program on its three floors, including the sitting, reclining, and standing postures of its three icons. After much pondering and many misjudgments, the pattern emerged and the "code" of the Paramecchuravinnagaram revealed itself.

It became apparent to me that this west-facing three-story palace sponsored by Nandivarman Pallavamalla about 770 was intended as an architectural "summa" of Bhagavata Dharma developed by that time. Moreover, it was designed to document Nandivarman's own liturgical career as a Bhagavata, explicitly through sculpted panels on the prakara and implicitly through sculpted panels on the middle-floor sanctum. To persuade anyone else of this, however, I knew would not be easy. Persuasion would depend on the explanatory power of the "code," on its ability to account for the details of sculpture, narrative, and design in a manner consistent with the texts and with Pancharatra liturgies. As a result, this work is an exercise in reading architectural, sculptural, written, and performed "texts" closely in order to understand the vision this Vishnu-house was intended to embody for sophisticated Bhagavatas of eighth-century Kanchipuram.

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PART I

The Approach to the Vishnu-house

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I

The Significance of the Temple

The two temples of Kanchipuram mentioned in the Introduction dramatically illustrate the religious and political conflict of the time and place, each one built as the personal place of worship by an emperor. Rajasimha articulated his Maheshvara religion majestically in the architecture and sculptures of his palace for Shiva known today as the Kailasanatha Temple. About fifty years later, Nandivarman Pallavamalla responded with his more intimate Vaikuntha Perumal Temple, which is the focus of this study. But a proper understanding of either temple requires some understanding of the rich religious context of the Pallava capital as the eighth century began.

Kanchipuram was a durga or fortress laid out between the Palar River and its branch called Vegavati. A rampart and moat enclosed this durga, penetrated only by guarded gateways. Where the west-east and north-south axes crossed stood its ancient center, which contained the royal palace and the temples for the Goddess (Kamakkottam), for Skanda (Kumarakkottam) and Trivikrama (Urakam), and perhaps a royal Buddhist shrine. The royal processional road (Raja Street) surrounded these structures on all four sides. To the west, in the prosperous section called Patakam, stood the temple of Krishna as Messenger of the Pandavas (Pandavatutar), and to the north stood the temple of Shiva (Ekamreshvara), an important center for Pashupatas. When Rajasimha built the Kailasanatha Temple, he placed it on the city's western side, facing east. Nandivarman placed his temple on the eastern side, facing west.

Outside the rampart to the south stood Buddhist sites: an Ashoka Stupa about one hundred feet tall, the royal vihara for bhikshus or

monks, and probably a shrine for Manimekalai, goddess of the trade routes to Southeast Asia, which by this time were vital to the economy of Pallava rule. A Jain temple stood southwest of the city (Jaina Kanchi). To the southeast was the hamlet of Attiyur, which contained temples for Vishnu reclining (Vehka), for Vishnu standing with eight arms (Ashtabhujaswami), and the hill-like temple for Vishnu carved of the atti or udumbara tree (Varadarajaswami). Modern Kanchipuram, however, has changed all this, for the city has spread over the remains of the rampart and moat to incorporate Attiyur and its temples as "Little Kanchi" or "Vishnu Kanchi."

Kanchipuram's eighth-century architecture reveals the variety of religions that made it their home because there was wealth to patronize them. Its port of Mamallapuram was a nexus of trade linking Dravida and the Deccan with Sumatra, Java, Champa in Vietnam, China, Cambodia, and Thailand. Wealthy merchants and rulers endowed monasteries and temples to house sadhus or ascetics of all sorts: Maheshvara, Pashupata, Kapalika, Bhagavata; shramana ascetics of Buddhist and Jain sects; and Brahmin sannyasins. Acharyas or scholar priests of different schools of ritual practice called Agamas, and acharyas of different doctrinal systems called Dharmas flourished alongside scholars and poets of a variety of languages. The elite of this city was highly literate, both verbally and visually, which explains why Nandivarman Pallavamalla constructed a Vishnu-house that is virtually a visual summary of Bhagavata Dharma. He addressed it to viewers who must have already known a great deal about the rites and doctrines of their religion, and in sophisticated detail. This is a temple meant not to teach by means of depictions but rather to remind devotees of what they already know. Its design is to use these recollections to transform consciousness, to "awaken" devout viewers to God, who gazes at them from all sides, and from within, wherever they look.

Part of the unfolding discovery of pattern and meaning in the Emperor's Vishnu-house involves understanding the uniqueness of Nandivarman's building and the impact it appears to have had on the Bhagavata religion among the Tamils. His temple was a new type for the time: the first completed Bhagavata vimana with three sanctums for worship placed one above the other on three floors. Its paradigm may have been the west-facing temple in Nandipuram near contemporary Kumbhakonam, where an icon sits within a single sanctum and faces west. After Nandivarman had gained final control of his realm he performed a purification ceremony at this Nandipuram temple. Judging from the poem Tirumangai composed to record the event (*PT* 5.10), Nandipuram's west-facing seated icon was believed to embody the two dimensions within God that Nandivarman later brought into view through the reclining and standing icons of his Vishnu-house.

Nandivarman's architect for his Master's palace no doubt followed the lead of a scholar of agama (*agamika*), and we shall discuss such scholars later.

Guided by him, the architect hid the seated icon, and its "internal" dimensions represented by the reclining and standing icons, within the palatial and mountainous vimana. He surrounded it with a drainage pathway that fills with water when the drain is plugged. He enclosed both palace and drainage pathway with the prakara wall on which he had the history of the Pallava Dynasty sculpted, giving prominence to his emperor's career. In other words, he produced an architectural version of God's body seen by Brahma as the magnificent "Indra of Earth" known as the mountain Vaikuntha on White Island (*Shvetadvipa*) in the Ocean of Milk: "The Bhagavan, who houses the moving and the unmoving, appeared as Earth's kinsman, the Indra of Earth embraced by waves with a thousand golden peaks as crown and the kaushtubha jewel as embryo" (*BP* 3.8.30).[1]

As the sponsor (*yajamana*) of this building, Nandivarman no doubt believed he would reap its fruits as Krishna describes them in the *Bhagavata Purana*: "By establishing my icon (*archa*), one gains the whole earth; by establishing my dwelling, the three realms of rebirth; by such things as worship (*puja*), the world of Brahma; and by all three, equality with me (*matsamyata*)" (*BP* 11.27.52). All three acts, Krishna explains, are to be performed according to the disciplines of rites taught by Veda and Tantra (*vaidikatantrikaih*), a combination characteristic of the Pancharatra Agama (*BP* 11.27.49). Since Nandivarman had fulfilled all three by sponsoring the Emperor's Vishnu-house and its liturgies he was presumably qualified for eventual "equality" with Krishna. By "equality" Krishna presumably means residence with him in his Highest Home (*dhama parama*), as he explains to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita* (*BG* 15.4–6). Dwelling with God in his Highest Home is the mode of emancipation (*mukti*) known as salokya. Resemblance to Him suggests the further mode of emancipation known as sarupa, in which one's shape is God's shape. Tirumangai suggests in his poem about the temple that sarupa is Nandivarman's destiny. In this final stanza, Tirumangai gives his name as Kalikanri, which means "one who put down with a strong hand the might of Kali," perhaps an honorific title (*PT* 2.9.10):

> The Pallavas' Sovereign of ancient fame
> Lives long in the land,
> The Emperor who built the Vishnu-house
> Well described by Kalikanri,
>   Ruler of Mangai's people and her
>   vast fields of abundant paddy,
> In this rich and beautiful garland
> Of Tamil purity whose skillful singers
> (By the grace of our Great Goddess Shri)
> Shall rule with brilliance in that shining World

Of abundant water surrounded by the Ocean
Which thunders like the warring chariots
Of the kings who rule this world.

Nandivarman was a Bhagavata emperor, and his dharma was not to cultivate the purity of consciousness Kalikanri says will result from "skillful" singing of his poem. But his dharma did allow him to obtain the same fruits by building a residence for this Master and serving Him there, which he did.

In addition to this personal religious motivation, Nandivarman probably built the Emperor's Vishnu-house as his response to Rajasimha's great temple across the city, constructed some fifty years earlier. A Bhagavata emperor in Kanchipuram would not want a Maheshvara predecessor to excel him in devotion. And like that great monument, this Vishnu-house must have been splendid to behold and walk through, for many, if not all, of its sculptures were painted, probably in the same colors the *Bhagavata Purana* instructs devotees to perceive in their own visualizations (*dhyana*) (Mahalingam 1969: 184–185). It must have been a powerful visual and sensual experience for any serious devotee to enter the mandala through its western gate, walk around the enclosing prakara wall, walk into the vimana and around the bottom sanctum, climb the stairs to the sanctum above, walk around it, and then walk downstairs and circumambulate yet again. Walking through a colorful mandala in this manner is what adepts in yoga, dhyana, dharana, and samadhi can do through their disciplined imaginations without moving an inch. But they are a minority among the devout. It is far easier for everyone else to participate in God's enormously complex body by walking, and this is what Nandivarman enabled them to do.

According to the evidence at hand, all other three-story Vishnu-houses built in southern India appeared after Nandivarman had built this one. By 806 one was built in Uttaramerur, south of Kanchipuram, and by 808 another was built in Kuram, north of Kanchipuram. In the Pandya realm, one was built in the capital of Madurai, and one in Tirukkottiyur east of Madurai, both probably in the ninth century (Soundara Rajan 1975: 261–262). Another was built in 866 in the Ay domain at Parthavasekharapuram near modern Trivandram at India's southern tip.[2] Significantly, the appearance of these Bhagavata tritala-vimanas coincides chronologically and geographically with the appearance of the four most prolific Alvar poets. Kalikanri or "Tirumangai" in the Pallava realm and Catakopan or "Nammalvar" in the Pandya realm are datable to the latter half of the eighth century. Vishnuchittan or "Periyalvar" and his daughter Kotai or "Antal" in the Pandya realm are datable to the first half of the ninth century, and perhaps later.

These unique temples and poems reveal a singular period of Bhagavata creativity in southern India, a fact recorded in the *Bhagavata Purana*, in a portion that may be dated to between the sixth and ninth centuries, but more

likely the latter. This portion is divided between Books Five (5.2–15) and Eleven (11.2–5) and consists of three stories. One is the story of the avatara of Vasudeva named Rishabha, another is the story of his son Bharata, and the third is the story of Rishabha's nine sons who are "ascetics clothed in the wind" (*shramana vatarashana*; 11.2.20.). The first two stories appear in a book that otherwise teaches cosmology, and the third appears in the Krishna story (*Krishakatha*) as it leads to the beginning of the Kali Yuga with the destruction of the descendents of King Yadu.

There are two reasons to date this set of three stories to these centuries. Padmanabha Jaini provides the first in his discussion of the Jina Rishabha's transformation into an avatara of Vishnu (Jaini 1977: 321–337). Jaini observes that although the first tirthankara, Rishabha, has always held the prime place in Jaina devotion, biographical details of Rishabha and of his son Bharata appeared among Jainas only in the sixth century, and then only in "the commentaries beginning with the *Avshyaka-niruti* of Bhadrabahu II." These, he says, are written in Prakrit and "used primarily by Jain monks in their daily ritual and hence not easily accessible to the public abroad" (Jaini 1977: 331). But the story of Rishabha became widely known when Jinasena told it in his *Adipurana* of the ninth century. Jinasena was a Digambara acharya, the guru of the Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha I (ca. 814–880). He established his court in Malkhed in northeastern Karnataka. Amoghavarsha was "an apostate from his traditional Vaishnava faith" according to Jaini, and he identifies him as "the king named Arhat of Konka, Venka, and Kutaka" described in *BP* 5.6.9–11 (Jaini 1977: 329). In Amoghavarsha's court, he argues, Jinasena refashioned the tirthankara Rishabha into a godlike Jina that could compete in the minds of Jaina laity with the trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva:

> The waves of the *bhakti* movement that had swept over the whole range of Indian life finally over-took the atheist Jains and forced them to deify, as it were, their human *tirthankaras* or face the peril of extinction. Probably the move brought to the surface the emotional hunger of the Jain laity for an object of worship more gracious and glamorous than merely the austere figure of an exalted human teacher. Jinasena very skillfully provided the Jain laity with a new identity of a socially honoured caste of "neo-Brahmans," a new book of codes in the guise of a Purana, and a new mage of the Jina endowed with a grandeur and majesty that could easily compete with the Hindu trinity. (Jaini 1977: 335)

Jaini says it is highly probable that Jinasena's *Adipurana* is the reason for the account in the *Bhagavata Purana*, and he may be correct. But since details of the stories of the tirthankara Rishabha and his son Bharata had been developed among Jaina ascetics since the sixth century, it is not impossible that

the Bhagavata interpretation of Rishabha as an avatara of Vasudeva has it origins during this period, as well. Moreover, the king of Dakshina Karnataka named Arhat (Jina) may be a collective representation of royal patrons of Jainas from this same period, and not a specific reference to the ninth-century king Amoghavarsha I, as Jaini argues.

Jaina literature flourished from patronage by Kadambas of the late fourth to early sixth centuries, by the Sendrakas subordinate to the early Chalukyas from the sixth century, by the Gangas from the seventh century, and by the Rashtrakutas from the eighth century (*EITA* 1.2 Text: 6–7, 108). Intimate knowledge of Jaina thought during this period was available to Bhagavata acharyas by means of marriages between the rulers in Kanchipuram and these patrons of Jainas, notably through the maternal line.[3] In the sixth century, the wife of the Bhagavata ruler Simhavarman (ca. 535–580), and mother of the Bhagavata ruler Simhavishnuvarman (ca. 560–580), constructed an Arhat temple for the Yapaniya Sangha (Yavanika Sangha) of the Jainas in the realm of the Western Gangas. Her intent was to generate glory for her husband's family and her own merit (Mahalingam 1969: 54–55). She may also have patronized the Jaina temple for Jina Vardhamana, which existed in Kanchipuram at the time (*EITA* 1.1 Text: 23, 74).

Nandivarman Pallavamalla began (or perhaps continued) generations of intermarriage with courts patronizing Jainas. Sometime after his unction ca. 731 he went into exile among the Rasthrakutas (his career will be discused in greater detail in chapter 4). He then married Reva, daughter of Dantidurga (a.k.a. Sahastunga Dantidurga Khadgavaloka). Dantidurga ruled from an uncertain place from 733 until he vanquished the Chalukyan Kirttivarman II. By 753 he had assumed sovereign titles. Around this time he assisted Nandivarman in regaining the throne in Kanchipuram, and surrounded the capital with his troops while Nandivarman received Bhagavata consecration (Tirumangai records this in *Periya Tirumoli* 2.8). Dantidurga converted a Buddhist cave at Ellora (number fifteen) into a Bhagavata cave-temple, where he left an inscription, and may have begun the celebrated Kailasanatha temple adjacent to it (cave sixteen).[4] Dantidurga and his daughter Reva may have been Bhagavatas, but Digambara and Yapaniya Jainas found considerable patronage in their court. Sometime in the middle of the century, the Digambara acharya Akalankadeva (ca. 720–780), a noted author on Jaina epistemology and logic, challenged the Brahamavadins in a dialectical disputation at Dantidurga's court. And this was only one example of Rashtrakuta patronage of Jaina acharyas and their scholarship before Amoghavarsha took Jinasena as his guru (*EITA* 1.2 Text: 108).

The son born to Nandivarman and Reva took Dantivarnam as his coronation name, honoring his maternal grandfather Dantidurga. He was a Bhagavata with connections to the Jainas of the Rashtrakuta court through his mother. Dantivarman married Aggalanimmati of the Kadambas of Vanavasi in

Karnataka, who had long patronized several Jaina sects including the Svetambara, Digambara, and Yapaniya (*EITA* 1.2 Text: 6). Dantivarman began as the junior ruler (*yuvaraja*) at the end of his father's reign and continued ruling until ca. 845. His son by Aggalanimmati reenforced the Pallava connection to his grandmother's Rashtrakuta lineage—and to the Jainas patronized there—by taking as his wife a daughter of Amoghavarsha named Sankha. He took the coronation name of Nandivarman III in honor of his paternal grandfather. He ruled for about twenty-two years (844–866). During these years his father-in-law Amoghavarsha (ca. 814–880) ruled in Malkhed in northeastern Karnataka. His guru was the Digambara acharya Jinasena, the famous composer of the *Adipurana*, which his disciple Gunabhadra completed. And Gunabhadra was the guru of Amoghavarsha's son Krishna I (*EITA* 1.2 Text: 108).

According to Jaini, this is when the Jina Rishabha entered the Bhagavata Purana as an avatara of Vishnu.

Nandivarman III eventually divided the Pallava realm between his two sons by his two wives. He gave its southern part to his son by Sankha named Nripatungavarman (ca. 854–880). He was an ally first of the Pandyan Shrimara and then of his son Varagunvarman II, both of whom appear to have been Bhagavatas. Nandivarman III gave the northern part of his realm to his son named Kampavarman by his wife Kandan Marampavaiyar of the Palluvettaraiyar. He ruled ca. 847–880. Kampavarman married into another royal family who patronized Jainas through Vijaya, daughter of Prithvipati I of the Gangas, based in Gangavadi in Karnataka and allied with the Rashtrakutas at Malkhed. They had a son named Aparajitavarman (ca. 875–894).

Rivalry between these half-brothers—Nripatunga in the south allied with Pandyas sympathetic to Bhagavata Dharma, and Kampavarman in the north allied with Gangas and Rashtrakutas sympathetic to Jaina Dharma—led Kampavarman to push Nripatunga into the Kaveri River valley. With the aid of his Ganga father-in-law Prithvipati I, Kampavarman's son Aparajitavarman finally defeated his paternal uncle in 878 or 881. Aparajitavarman—connected through his mother with Jaina patrons—was then sole ruler of the Pallava realm for about fifteen years until Aditya Chola slew him in ca. 894 and brought the Pallava Dynasty to its end.

As the above account documents, generations of family connections between royal patrons of Bhagavata Dharma and of Jaina Dharma would have provided contexts for the story of the Jina Rishabha as an avatara of Vishnu to develop long before Jinasena's *Adipurana* in the middle of the ninth century. The Buddha as the ninth avatara appears in the first inscription listing the ten avataras, which is in the Adivaraha Cave-temple in Mamallapuram and is dated to the middle of the seventh century (Srinivasan 1964: 173). It is unlikely that a story of Rishabha as an avatara would not have appeared by this time as well. But this would not be the developed literary version now contained in the *Bhagavata Purana*, and Jaini may be correct that it was composed in response

to Jinasena's *Adipurana* composed in the court of Dantivarman III's father-in-law Amoghavarsha.

The second reason to think this literary telling of the story of Rishabha and Bharata entered the *Bhagavata Purana* between the sixth and ninth centuries—and most likely in the ninth—is found in an "old legend" (*itihasa puratana*; *BP* 11.2.14). This legend is about a discussion between Rishabha's nine shramana sons and a king of Mithila in Videha named Nimi. When the shramana named Karabhajana teaches king Nimi he describes the greatness of the Kali Yuga (*BP* 11.5.29–34). In the Dvapara Yuga, he says, the Bhagavan is worshiped with the rites of Veda and Tantra, which refer to the Pancharatra Agama. But in the Kali Yuga he is worshiped with various Tantra rites in a form possessing a black complexion brilliant as sapphire, with all his arms, decorations, weapons, and attendants. Worshipers extol his glories and names through sankirtana, and they pray a mantra that ends with a description of Rama leaving Adyodhya and chasing a wild animal made of maya desired by Sita.

The Kali Yuga is the greatest of the four ages, Karabhajana explains, because people attain their goal merely through sankirtana; no better method exists. "People for whom Narayana is the last resort (*narayanaparayanah*)," Karabhajana observes, "appear more often in the Kali Yuga than in other times, and especially in the Dravida region" (*BP* 11.5.39–40). He then describes the Dravida region by its river systems. First there are the Tamraparni River and the Kritamala or Vaigai River, which sustain the Pandya realm. Second is the Payasvini or Palar River, which sustains the Pallava realm. Third is the Kaveri River "of great purity," which sustains the Chola and Muttaraiyar realms. Fourth is "the great river flowing westward," which sustains the Chera realm. This last in Tamil is the Great River (*periya-aru*) known today as the Periyar. It flows from the Western Ghats into the Arabian Sea in what is now Kerala.

According to R. Nagaswamy, however, recent excavations and discoveries of coins reveal that the capital of the Chera realm, which is known both as Karur and Vanji, was located not in Kerala but on the Anporunai or Amaravati River in Tamilnadu. This river originates in the western hills of Varahagiri. It flows eastward to join the Kaveri River near Karur, where the Chera capital existed probably from the time of Ashoka Maurya in the third century BCE. It flourished during the Sangam period from the first century CE. The Pallavas of Kanchipuram dominated the Kaveri region, including Karur, from the sixth century. But in the eighth century it was still considered the Chera capital, because when Nandivarman conquered Karur he took the Chera title of Villavan. Tirumangai reports this in the first stanza of his poem about this Vishnu-house (*PT* 2.9.1). This conquest early in the second half of the eighth century is probably the occasion for the Chera to shift their capital of Karur or Vanji to "the great river flowing westward" in Kerala. From the twelfth century on, these names in Tamil literature refer to the Chera's western capital on the

Periyar, not to its original location on the Anporunai or Amaratavti River (Nagaswamy 1995: 107–108).

Since Karabhajana refers to "the great river flowing westward" as the system sustaining the Chera realm, therefore, this "ancient legend" must not be earlier than the end of the eighth century. But its description of Bhagavata devotion in Dravida points later into the ninth century, for as we have noted, the most prolific Tamil poets of Bhagavata devotion lived in the Pallava, Chola, and Pandya realms the legend describes by means of their rivers: Kalikanri or "Tirumangai"; Chatakopan or "Nammalvar"; Vishnuchittan or "Periyalvar"; and Kotai or "Antal." Dating to the second half of the eighth century and to the ninth, they proclaim in their Tamil poems the doctrine that Karabhajana says is popular in Dravida. It teaches complete submission to the Giver of Emancipation (*mukunda*), with no debts or obligations to any other being, and with love (*priya*) focused completely on Him (*BP* 11.5.41–42). This is the Bhagavata doctrine of taking refuge in God (*prapatti*) and living thereafter as a refugee (*prapanna*) in complete dependence. In Bhagavata Dharma this doctrine of dependence exists alongside the doctrine of ritual activity, which by the eighth century we may call Bhagavata Tantra. Krishna teaches Arjuna both doctrines (*BG* 12.6–11). But in the end he urges him to live dependently as a prapanna refugee (*BG* 18.65–66). Kotai's *Tiruppavai* records the prapanna doctrine as found in Villi's New Town (*Villipputtur*) south of Madurai. It is devotion expressed openly to others. But in her *Nacchiyar Tirumoli* she records her own practice of Tantra. It is devotion expressed secretly (Hudson 1980 and 2000b).

Nandivarman Pallavamalla's newly built Vishnu-house presumably played a role in the generation of this enormously creative period of Bhagavata Dharma in Dravida. It is possible, for example, that Kotai's father Vishnuchittan had Nandivarman in mind when he composed his New Year poem for Krishna called *Tiruppallantu* or "Many Years."[5] Its first stanza ends with Krishna subduing the wrestler Chanura in the Mathura wrestling ring before he kills Kamsa:

> Many years, many years,
> Many thousands of years,
> Many millions of hundreds
>   of thousands
> May there be auspicious protection
> For the beauty of your red feet,
> O Krishna the color of black gem
> With arms so powerful
> They subdued the wrestler.

A depiction of Krishna wrestling Chanura appears on the middle-floor sanctum of the Emperor's Vishnu-house as the conclusion of a sculpted sequence that implicitly records Krishna's subjugation of Nandivarman through the

consecration (*diksha*) that made him his beloved slave. Vishnuchittan may have had this depiction in mind; he may have used Chanura to represent the "Pallava Wrestler" in Kanchipuram, to honor him during the rule of Pandyan Bhagavatas who replaced Maravarman Rajasimha (730–765), the Shaiva Pandya who supported the opponents of Nandivarman's rule.

Maravaraman Rajasimha's immediate successor was Varagunavarman I (765–815), followed by Shrimara Shrivallabha (815–862) and then by Varagunavarman II.[6] We have already met the last as a close ally of the Pallava king Nripatungavarman, whose vassel he may have become (*EITA* 1.1 Text: 111). Varagunavarman I is identified as a paramavaishnava in the Shrivaramangala copper plates of ca. 770, and he had a minister who was known as Maran Kari and as Madhura Kavi. This minister may be the same Madhurakavi who wrote a single poem of eleven stanzas (*kannin chirutampu*) to honor the Alvar he calls "The Venerable One of Southern Kurukur" (*tenkurukur nampi*). His name is Maran Chatakopan and he lives at Kurukurnakar on the Porunal or Tamparaparni River (*TVM* 4.5.11). He holds the office of the "Nakaran of bounteous Kurukur," which suggests that he is a village or temple master (*TVM* 4.10.11).[7] But he is also "Chatakopan, the Pandya Lord of the Tamparaparni River" (*TVM* 9.2.11), "Chatakopan, the chief of Kurukai and the Pandya lord of fertile groves" (*TVM* 3.6.11), and "the Pandya district lord of prosperous groves" (*TVM* 8.9.11). He holds this last position for a long time (*TVM* 5.6.11). If Madhurakavi in the copperplate dated ca. 770 is the same as the poet Madhurakavi, this means that he and Chatakopan, a Pandyan official in Kurukur on the Tampraparni River, were contemporaries of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, and of Tirumangai in the latter half of the eighth century.

Vishnuchittan and his daughter Kotai in Villi's New Town south of Madurai appear to have lived later. In the penultimate stanza of *Tiruppallantu*, Vishnuchittan says, "Like Chelvan Apimanatunkan, king of those joined in the faultless assembly, I, too, am an old slave of Yours, Tirumal." *Chelvan apimanatunkan* means "the prosperous man who is dear" and is equivalent in Sanskrit to *Shri vallabhah*, which is the title of the Pandyan Shrimaran Shrivallabhan. Since Shrivallabhan ruled 815–862, and since Vishnuchittan says that both of them are old, we may date Vishnuchittan and his daughter Kotai to the first half of the ninth century. The term translated as "those . . . in the . . . assembly," which is *kottiyar*, may refer to the Pandya ghatika, a learned assembly (*goshthi*) of Brahmins connected to kingship. Or it may refer to the inhabitants of the town east of Madurai known as Tirukottiyur (Shri Goshtipuram in Sanskrit). This town will reappear below.

Further evidence of the far-reaching creative influence of Nandivarman's newly built Vishnu-house during these years of these "waves of the bhakti movement" appears in two poems composed by Chatakopan and translated by A. K. Ramanujan. They are organized according to the same sequence of iconic postures found in the Emperor's Vishnu-house. But Chatakopan begins at the

top with Krishna standing on earth, moves to him reclining as Brahma's origin in the middle, and ends with him sitting in his Highest Home on the bottom. The first poem is *Tiruvaymoli* 7.6.5, to which I have appended clarifying notes:

My cowherd [*standing*]
my rough dark diamond

how will this self of mine
ever-trammeled in the three [*reclining*]
worlds unfolding
in your navel's lotus

how will it come through
and reach you there [*sitting*]

in your overwhelming world of light?[8]

Tirumangai shares this interpretation of these three iconic postures, as we shall later see. The top sanctum is God's grossly material body (*sthulasharira*) where He stands as Krishna in the world we inhabit. The middle sanctum is God's subtle material body (*sukshmasharira*), where He reclines as the source of our world. This is where Brahma repeatedly goes to sleep and awakens for a lifetime we experience as the repeated dissolution and emanation of our seemingly endless world of death and birth, the realm of samsara so difficult to cross. The bottom sanctum is God's body of pure material being (*shuddhasattva*), which Krishna calls his Highest Home. It is the ultimate goal for anyone seeking emancipation from samsara. Chatakopan's problem translates into the terms of the three-story vimana this way: How can we move from the top-floor sanctum to the bottom-floor sanctum without getting trapped in the middle-floor sanctum?

He offers a solution to this problem in the second poem, which is *Tiruvaymoli* 8.7.9. It is the consecrated life of disciplined devotion according to Bhagavata Tantra—and it appears that the sadhana he followed produced astonishing results for him:

My dark one [*standing*]
stands there as if nothing's
changed

after taking entire
into his maw
all three worlds [*reclining*]
the gods
and the good kings
who hold their lands
as a mother would
a child in her womb—

and I
  by his leave *[sitting]*
have taken him entire

and I have him in my belly *[Chatakopan's body]*
for keeps.[9]

If we were to unpack this poem we would have a concise summary of Bhagavata Dharma in ninth-century south India. Chatakopan's statement, "I by his leave have taken him entire" combines the devout dependence of the refugee prapanna on God's grace with the ceremonial activities of a Tantrika liturgical discipline. Chatakopan's skill in that discipline may explain the experience he recorded in another poem, an experience that may be like that of a chamiyati through whom a being speaks to others, but probably more like that of a yogin wordless in enstatic consciousness. As Ramanujan translated *Tiruvaymoli* 10.7.1, "Poets, beware, your life is in danger: the lord of gardens is a thief, . . . he . . . sneaked into my body, . . . he consumed me life and limb, and filled me, made me over into himself."[10]

In both these poems Chatakopan reports his perception of a profound mystery: He holds God in his self, and God holds him in His self, and yet God remains in the sanctum as icon. Krishna's Highest Home of overwhelming light and Chatakopan's gross body of overwhelming darkness become neither two nor one, but something in between. This "in-between-ness" is the subject of the first poem in his *Tiruvaymoli* collection (1.1.4), also translated by Ramanujan:

We here and that man, this man,
  and that other in-between,
and that woman, this woman,
  and that other, whoever,

those people, and these,
  and these others in-between,
this thing, that thing,
  and this other in-between, whichever,

all things dying, these things,
  those things, those others in-between,
good things, bad things,
  things that were, that will be,

being all of them,
he stands there.[11]

In still another poem Chatakopan confesses the impossibility of talking about such a mystery (in my translation of *Tiruvaymoli* 2.5.10):

Not a man, not a woman,
  and not a man-woman
  different from these;
Not seen, not existing,
  but not *not* existing too;
Appearing as the shape desired
  when the time for worship comes,
  yet not that either—

Talk of our Bhagavan
Is so oblique
It falls apart completely.

How should we understand these amazing correlations between Nandivarman's Vishnu-house of three sanctums in Kanchipuram and poems composed by Chatakopan living in the Pandya realm hundreds of miles to the south? I think it unlikely that Nandivarman or his acharya expressed a new Bhagavata doctrine through their unique tritala-vimana; instead they brought into view the doctrine of three dimensions in God's body that is found in the *Bhagavad-gita* and other portions of the *Mahabharata*, and that is implied by the vyuha theology of the Pancharatra Agama, evidence of which appears in the latter half of the first millennium BCE. Acharyas in royal courts apparently taught this doctrine to their disciples by means of a mandala. For lack of a specific name we may call it "Krishna's Mandala."[12]

This mandala must have been present wherever there were consecrated Bhagavatas as adept as Chatakopan, and it accounts for the correlations between *Tiruvaymoli* 7.6.5. and 8.7.9 and the Paramecchuravinnagaram. The fact that Nandivarman used his three-dimensional built form of Krishna's Mandala as a summa of Bhagavata Dharma further suggests that it was the paradigm for the entire religious system. We shall discuss it in detail when we turn to the Emperor's Vishnu-house in parts II and III.

The Name of the Vishnu-house: Paramecchura as God, Emperor, and Architect

The official name of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple when it was built encodes important information. Tirumangai uses it in its Tamil form, *Paramecchuravinnagaram*. Its Sanskrit form, *parameshvara-vishnugriha*, was used in an inscription carved on the vimana about 813 to record the gift of a gold vessel by Nandivarman's son and successor, Dantivarman (Minakshi 1941: 1). Paramecchura and Parameshvara literally mean "supreme ruler." As used in the poem, *Paramecchuravinnagaram* may be interpreted in three ways: as the

"Supreme Ruler's Vishnu-house"; as the "Emperor's Vishnu-house"; and as the "Vishnu-house of the Emperor's Architect."

In the first interpretation, as a title for the Bhagavan, Supreme Ruler refers to the sitting icon on the bottom floor. As we shall see, this icon embodies God's formation (*vyuha*) called Vasudeva, the Supreme Ruler of the brahmanda, or what we may call "spacetime."[13]

In the second interpretation, as a title for the Pallava ruler, Supreme Ruler means emperor, and the inscriber of a grant Nandivarman made ca. 753–754 describes himself as "The Majestic Emperor's Master Woodworker."[14] This use also appears in the inscription on the south prakara walkway, which we shall examine in detail in chapter 4. The inscription's first label refers to the Parameshvara who died before Pallavamalla ascended the throne. The third label refers to Pallavamalla as the boy who would become the Parameshvara. The tenth label describes the status of Parameshvara he received after the unction that made him an Indra of Men (*narendra*) with the name Nandivarman.

The eleventh label adds, however, the Tamil title Perumanatikal. Literally, this means "the feet (*atikal*) of the Bhagavan (*peruman*)." In the context of a Vishnu-house it denotes the feet of the icon where offerings are placed.[15] When applied to a person, *perumanatikal* means that he has offered his self to the Bhagavan's feet to be his slave. The paradigm for this is the asura king Bali, who offers himself at the feet of Dwarf after he takes his three strides (*BP* 8.2–11). Since the plural "feet" (*atikal*) may also denote respect, I understand the title in Nandivarman's case to mean the Bhagavan's Venerable Slave. It is the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit title *paramabhagavata*, which means the Bhagavan's Supreme Slave. Both terms likewise refer to the King of Kings and Supreme Ruler (*rajadhirajaparameshvara*), a title for Nandivarman that appears in a grant dated ca. 753–754 (*SII* 2. 342–361, stanza 71). The word "emperor" as used here captures all these meanings.

The third interpretation of *paramecchura* and *parameshvara* refers to the imperial architect who designed the Emperor's Vishnu-house. We know from an inscription in the first three-story vimana built after this one, which was about 806 in Uttaramerur, that its architect was called *parameshvara-peruntacchan*.[16] This may mean that the master architect's name was Parameshvara, but more likely it means that he was the master architect serving the emperor, in other words the Imperial Architect. According to the inscription, he belonged to the area of Kanchipuram called simply Patakam, which means "the section" (*patakam*) and is the short form of Pumpatakam, which means "the prosperous (*pum*) section." It was west of the elevated portion of the city's ancient center.

This Imperial Architect may have been the same master architect who appears in the grant Nandivarman issued near the very end of his reign in response to Tirumangai's request. It mentions the Master Architect (*per-*

untacchan) of Vitelvituku Pallava. The word *vitelvituku* names the oath Nandivarman took during his unction at the beginning of his career.[17] This master architect is said to live in the Aimpanaiccheri section of Kanchipuram, and his son, Shri Dandi, carved the letters of the grant on the copper plates.[18] Perhaps Aimpanaiccheri was the official name for the prosperous section of the city known as Patakam.[19]

An inscription on the foundation of the Uttaramerur temple notes that "scholars of Agama" (*agamika*) guided its architect. Given the Pancharatra basis of Nandivarman's earlier vimana in Kanchipuram, it may be that these agamikas also followed the Pancharatra Agama. Gros and Nagaswamy argue, however, that the Shriveli vimana in Uttaramerur was designed according to the Vaikhanasa Agama, specifically according to the *Marichi-samhita*.[20] This issue cannot be settled here. But I suggest that the direction in which a vimana faces indicates its purpose, and that a vimana's purpose accounts for its design, which means differently arranged and oriented tritala-vimanas may derive from the same liturgical tradition, in this case the Pancharatra.[21]

The Agama scholar who guided the Imperial Architect in designing the Emperor's Vishnu-house obviously possessed a very complex vision of God's



FIGURE I.I. Nandivarman Pallavamalla's acharya enthroned in a mandapa adjacent to a model of the vimana he designed. Source unidentified.

body transmitted by Bhagavata Dharma through text, liturgy, iconography, and architecture. He was no doubt an acharya, a scholar priest who consecrated devotees and taught his disciples the meanings of the mantras they received. By the mid-eighth century, lineages of such Bhagavata acharyas supported by their disciples in royal courts and private households had existed in India for at least a millennium. Nandivarman's acharya guided the Imperial Architect in designing his three-dimensional mandala properly, a fact recorded on the prakara walkway, as illustrated by the composite photograph in Figure 1.1.

These sculptures appear in an enthronement scene we shall discuss in chapter 4, which moves from north to south (the viewer's right to left). The enthroned acharya appears after a display of the ritual implements by means of which Pallavamalla's general, Udayachandra, slew his rival Chitramaya Pallavaraja and then won seven battles "and more" to give his emperor "the whole realm." The acharya's place in this sequence suggests that he supervised the rites of the conch, drum, and khatvanga whose tejas brought all this about, and then designed the tritala-vimana to house the emperor's Master.

Before we turn to the poem Tirumangai composed about this vimana and to the Vishnu-house itself, let us consider six concepts important to the discussion that follows.

2

Six Concepts

In order to discuss the religious ideas that produced the emperor and his Vishnu-house, it will be helpful to examine six concepts basic to Bhagavata Dharma, as I understand it, by the eighth century. They are God as person, God as place, God as male and female, the doctrine of formation, the structure of the person, and inner vision.

God as Person

Who is God? Who becomes Krishna? According to Bhagavatas, God (*deva*) has at least one thousand names. In this study six will be especially important: Narayana, Vasudeva, Bhagavan, Vishnu, Hari, and Krishna.

Narayana

The name Narayana denotes God as Supreme Self (*paramatman*), who is Supreme Person (*parama purusha*).[1] Narayana is unchanging and unique, and transcends space and time by containing it within His Self. Brahma, who emerges from Narayana yet remains inseparable from Him, glosses His name as the "resting place or course (*ayana*) of man (*narah*), the wisdom ruling the atman of all embodied beings, the witness of all realms, who has waters as the resting place of His body, which eats men but does not compress them because of its true being, not because of His magically creative power" (*BP* 10.14.14).[2] Markandeya's vision of the baby on the banyan branch in the waters of the

deluge illustrates Brahma's final statement, for when the baby swallows this seer he sees the entire universe inside him and functioning properly (*BP* 12.9).

Seers have seen Narayana as a mass of light (*vishakhayupa*) shooting forth all forms like sparks, a light of pure consciousness and being that gives rise to "formations" (*vyuha*) and to their "transformations" (*vibhava*). Among the latter, for example, are the shining devas of light, their asura opponents of darkness, humans, animals, and nonsentient elements.[3] Yet everything produced by this light, including darkness and asuras, is contained within it and sustained by it. The vimana that constitutes the Emperor's Vishnu-house appears to be a built form of this blazing pillar.[4] When it was newly painted it must have looked from a distance like a mountainous flame emerging above the enclosing prakara wall, replicating on a gigantic scale the fire burning in the square raised altar (*uttara vedi*) at the eastern end of the Vedic sacrificial arena.

Vasudeva

When Narayana manifests His glorious wealth (*bhaga*) prior to producing spacetime and its contents, he is known as Vasudeva, a name whose meaning repeats the meaning of Narayana as the abode of humans. He is simultaneously "God (*deva*) who is the dwelling place (*vasu*) for everything," and "God (*deva*) for whom everything is a dwelling place (*vasu*)." The name Vasudeva captures the mystery Chatakopan experienced, which we shall encounter repeatedly: God contains everything, yet at the same time is contained by everything. Vasudeva names the unmanifest *brahman* (*akshara brahma*) as the cause of all causes; He is the primordial essence of being (*sat*), consciousness (*chit*), and joy (*ananda*) with a "body" made of pure clarity (*shuddhasattva*) (Tapasyananda 1980–1982 1: xxx–xxxii). The vision of God's body is everything a Bhagavata can hope for. "Who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me," Krishna tells Arjuna, "for him I am not destroyed and he is not destroyed for me. . . . [But] the person possessing *jnana*, who at the end of many births takes refuge in me [saying] 'everything is Vasudeva,' he is a great atman very difficult to find" (*BG* 6.30; 7.19).

Why does Narayana as Vasudeva bring all things into being? Bhagavatas say it is for His own pleasure (*svasukha*); spacetime arises from the joy innate to the creativity of consciousness (*BP* 1.9.32). In relation to every "thing," which is a name-and-form (*namarupa*), Vasudeva's bhaga divides into three pairs. They are:

1. knowledge or omniscience (*jnana*) and its indefatigable or transforming power (*bala*);
2. sovereignty (*aishvarya*) and its ability to act without being affected by the action (*virya*); and
3. the potency (*shakti*) of sound and its brilliant conquering power (*tejas*).

As Sanjukta Gupta explains, omniscience (*jnana*) is God's essence and is primary; the other five bhagas are contained within it (Gupta 1989: 225).

God is called the Bhagavan because He possesses this wealth (*bhaga*) divided into three pairs. A person, whether male or female, who has been consecrated to the Bhagavan is called a Bhagavata, and anyone exclusively devoted to him is in practice a strict monotheist (*ekantikabhakta*). (Appendix 1 contains an exploration of the term *Bhagavata*.) A Bhagavata belongs to the Bhagavan in the way a slave belongs to a master. This metaphor of master and slave, which plays a highly significant role in religious thought and behavior, means that not only does the master own the slave but he is also responsible for him, protects him, and may use him as his representative. The slave's place is at his master's feet, and he is to be ready to serve him at any moment without question. He feels safe if his master is both powerful and compassionate, which God certainly is. There is an intimacy of mutual dependence in this metaphor not found in the Euro-American concept of slave as property.

Vishnu

Bhagavatas believe that because the Supreme Person as Supreme Self pervades all the things he emanates and is the one who acts within and through them, he is to be called Vishnu. This name points to him as the "pervading actor" and is found in the mantras of the *Rig Veda*. The seer Dirghatamas addresses Vishnu in three *Rig Veda* poems (1.155–157). He extols his prowess (*virya*) as like the lion, the fearful and hungry wild beast (*mriga*) of the mountains, whose roar at the end of night signals the approach of sunrise. He praises the three strides (*vikrama*) Vishnu takes to measure out directional space, only two of which, earth and sky, can humans see. His third stride places His foot (*padam*) in the realm (*padam*) above the pole star (*dhruva*) from which He looks down on devas in heaven and humans on earth. Vishnu resides in His padam as a young prince (*yuvakumara*), who turns chronological time like a vast wheel (*chakra*) making ninety-four revolutions.[5] Yet Vishnu also acts in the worlds beneath Him through His descents (*avatara*) in confined modes (*nirodha*) to protect and to reveal.

Hari

While the name Vishnu denotes God's fullness (*vishvam*) as pervading everything (*vishnu*) he possesses, the name Hari denotes his color (Bhattar: 106–108). The color called *hari* in the *Rig Veda* ranges from fawn through reddish brown, brown, tawny, pale yellow, yellow and bay, to green and greenish. It suggests the color of the lion in the mountains likened to Vishnu, the color of gold as an emblem of prosperity, and the color green as the nourishment of cattle. *Hari* also suggests the Bhagavan's ability to take away evil or sin; in this

sense it also takes the form *hara*, destroyer, which is a name for Shiva (Monier-Williams 1964: 1289). In Bhagavata lore, Hari as green and greenish refers to the Bhagavan's all-pervading fullness as it resides on (or as) the hill named Govardhana in Vrinda's Forest (Vrindavana) along the Yamuna River in Vraja (*BP* 10.24.31–38). His color there is *hari* and he accepts the gifts cowherds offer him for the sake of prosperous increase (*vardhana*) for their cattle (*go*) and fields (Bhattar: 106, 585).

Krishna

The *Bhagavata Purana* explicitly identifies Krishna as Narayana, Vasudeva, Vishnu, and Hari—the Bhagavan fully present in human form. The bard named Ugrashravas tells Saunaka and other seers at a sacrifice that all other appearances of God are his shares and parts (*amshakala*), but "the man Krishna is the Bhagavan himself" (*BP* 1.3.28). This statement appears in a portion of the purana that is probably late in origin, perhaps a clarification by Bhagavatas of their belief about Krishna addressed to others who know his story but are not members of their religion. But this is not a new doctrine, because the Krishna Story (*Krishnakatha*) in the *Bhagavata Purana* makes the same point repeatedly, and this story belongs to what I think is the oldest portion of the purana.

The Krishna Story comprises Books Ten and Eleven. There is no question in my mind that later portions have been inserted into it, for example, Akrura's prayer while submerged in a clear pool of Yamuna River water (*BP* 10.40), the story of Rishabha's shramana sons discussed in chapter 1 (*BP* 11.2–5), and the long "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" Krishna teaches to Uddhava in Dvaraka just before he goes to Prabhasa (*BP* 11.6–29).[6] If we remove these later additions, the Krishna Story consists of Book Ten and three chapters of Book Eleven (11.1, 30, 31); and this is where we find early identifications of Krishna as the Bhagavan Himself (*bhagavan svayam*). Let us examine some examples.

At the beginning of the Krishna Story, the Bhagavan as the Self of everything tells the creative power of His unified consciousness (*yogamaya*) about His plan for His own birth as Balarama and Krishna. He begins with Balarama. "The whole of Shesha, which is my abode, will become an embryo in Devaki's womb which you shall transplant to Rohini's womb" (*BP* 10.2.8). His abode (*dhama*), of course, is omniscience (*jnana*), which is the bhaga at the base of all others. Jnana is the first to emanate to produce directional space and chronological time, and when the other five have devolved into it, only it remains. The word *shesha* as "first to escape" and "primordial remainder" (*adishesha*) captures both meanings. In iconography, the remainder (*shesha*) as God's abode (*dhama*) appears as a multihooded snake (*naga*) that has no end (*ananta*), because jnana encompasses spacetime and is infinite. Devaki conceives him in Mathura, but Rohini in Gokula gives birth to him as Balarama.

The Bhagavan then tells Yogamaya about his birth as Krishna: "I will then become Devaki's son through a share of my glorious wealth (*amshabhagena*), and you, O fair one, will become [the daughter] of Nanda's wife Yashoda" (*BP* 10.2.9). This statement makes an important theological point. A "share" of the bhaga of the Supreme Person or Self is the Supreme Person's bhaga, because a "share" (*amsha*) of fullness (*purnam*) taken from fullness is fullness. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (5.1) explains the doctrine this way, in Patrick Olivelle's translation:

The world there is full;
The world here is full;
Fullness from fullness proceeds.
After taking fully from the full,
It still remains completely full.[7]

This doctrine is taught through narrative details. Krishna as God's fullness will contain the moving universe within his self, which means Devaki his mother becomes the dwelling place for Him who is the dwelling place for the moving universe (*BP* 10.2.19)—-the mystery of the container contained by what it contains once again. His cowherd mother Yashoda perceives this when Krishna, nursing at her breast, yawns and she sees the entire realm of the moving and unmoving inside his mouth (*BP* 10.7.34–37). In another episode Krishna eats mud, but denies it, so Yashoda forces him to open his mouth and again sees the entire universe inside it (*BP* 10.8.32–45). The seer Markandeya has a similar vision (*BP* 12.9.10–34). And Brahma, too, is astounded that Narayana contains him even as he contains Krishna opening his mouth for Yashoda (*BP* 10.14.11–17).

Kamsa will hate Krishna as the Ruler of Senses (Hrishikesha), but Brahma, Shiva, Narada, and others will praise him as the Person (*purusha*) Madhava, who earlier made descents (*krita-avatara*) not out of causal necessity (*karana*) but out of play (*vinoda*) (*BP* 10.2.24–42). He was contained (*nirodha*) as Fish (*matsya*), Horse (*ashva*), Tortoise (*kacchapa*), Man-lion (*nrisimha*), Boar (*varaha*), Goose (*hamsa*), King (*rajanya*), Seer (*vipra*), and the Learned One (*vibudha*) (*BP* 10.2.39–40). But none of these was God in His fullness.

In the dark of the night "the Pervading Actor, the dwelling place of all hearts" takes birth as the Impeller of Men (*janardana*) in Kamsa's jail through the Kshatriya named Vasudeva and the divine shape of his wife Devaki (*BP* 10.3.8). For this reason Krishna the man is known as "son of Vasudeva" and as "son of Devaki" (*devakiputra*). But to save his son's life, Vasudeva quickly takes him to the cowherd settlement (*gokula*) in Vraja to live in disguise as a Shudra keeper of cattle; these people have no walled city, no territory, no village, and no house, but reside in forests and on mountains (*BP* 10.24.24). Later, when his "birth" as the son of the cowherd chieftain Nanda to his wife Yashoda is celebrated, Krishna is said to be the "endless ruler of everything"

(*vishveshvara-ananta*) who is both Pervading Actor and Nanda's son (*BP* 10.5.13–16). Nanda's wandering people now prosper, because by dwelling among them Hari, the unborn protector of man (*abhun-nripa*), turns their gokula into a playground for Shri, his Dear One (*rama-krida*) (*BP* 10.5.18). When these cowherds prepare the annual sacrifice to Indra as the source of this prosperity, Krishna appears to them as Hari on the mountain Govardhana in a gigantic shape (*rupa*) that consumes their offerings (*BP* 10.24.35–38), and then holds up the mountain as an umbrella to shield the cowherds from Indra's angry rains.

Krishna's true identity is also stated in the *Chandogya Upanishad* (*CU* 3.17). Here he appears as a student of "the awesome son of Angiras" (*ghora angirasa*); Krishna is identified by his matrynomic, Krishna Son of Devaki. This "awesome son of Angiras" has just taught Krishna the doctrine that a man's life is a sacrifice, a doctrine at the heart of the *Bhagavad-gita*. The sage is now without craving or thirst (*apipasa*) and near his end. In this state of clear perception he tells Devaki's son, "Take refuge in these three: You are the undecaying (*akshita*), you are the unfallen (*acyuta*), you are life breath sharpened (*pranasanshita*)." The final identification appears to denote the syllable *Om*. This upanishad begins by identifying *Om* as the High Chant (*udritha*), which is not only the essence of the *Sama Veda* but also "the quintessence of all essences; it is the highest, the ultimate, the eighth" (*CU* 1.3). And Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gita* similarly identifies himself as the imperishable atman dwelling in the hearts of all beings, as the *Sama Veda*, and as the syllable *Om* (*BG* 10.20, 22, 25).

It is possible that this "awesome son of Angiras" appears as Krishna's guru in the Krishna Story, but the evidence is only suggestive. In this story Devaki's husband Vasudeva has Purodhasa and other Brahmins consecrate Krishna and Balarama as "twice-born" (*dvija-samskriti*, *BP* 10.45.26). Purodhasa may be the same as the "awesome son of Angiras" in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, because the form *puradhasa* denotes an Angirasa (Monier-Williams 1964: 636a). If so, Krishna Devakiputra in that upanishad and Krishna Devakiputra in this Krishna Story are the same, and so is his guru. This implies that the *Chandogya Upanishad*, which may date to the eighth century BCE, provides a detail of the Krishna Story known at the time: near the end of his life, the "awesome son of Angiras" revealed to Krishna that he is the imperishable, unfallen, and life-breath sharpened, and therefore is greater than Indra, a point the Krishna Story makes repeatedly. This detail also suggests that Krishna belongs to the *Atharva-angirasa* tradition, which raises the further question of whether Krishna Devakiputra is the same Krishna son of Angirasa who composed three poems addressed to Indra in the *Rig Veda* (*RV* 10.42–44). Finally, it is significant that the *Shatapatha Brahmana* dated to the same period as the *Chandogya Upanishad* contains an early account of the Person Narayana in the context of a pancharatra or five-night sacrifice, for the liturgical tradition (*agama*) of the five-nights (*pancharatra*) is closely connected to the Krishna Story and to Bhagavata Dharma (see Hudson 2002a and 2002c).

According to the Krishna Story, after Purodhasa consecrates the brothers as twice born, the acharya of the Yadava clan named Garga consecrates them to the Gayatri vow (*gayatri-vrata*, *BP* 10.45.29). Afterward they dwell with Sandipani, a native of Kashi living in Avanti, where they learn sixty-four subjects in sixty-four days (*BP* 10.45.36). When Krishna and Balarama are one hundred twenty-five years old they leave Earth as men, and shortly thereafter our human realm of Bharata enters the present Kali Yuga, the age dominated by delusion: Earth loses her true being (*satya*), right order (*dharma*), satisfaction (*dhriti*), glory (*kirti*), and majesty (*shri*) (*BP* 11.31.17). Yet Krishna's presence—like that of less complete avataras, who are only shares or parts of the whole—continues on earth in the mode of icons (*archa*). They are sculpted and consecrated according to rites that "have come down" (*agama*) from Vasudeva as teachings addressed specifically to the Kali Yuga. People in this age who serve Krishna in his iconic bodies according to the mixed rites of Veda and Agama as found in Pancharatra liturgies may gain the true being, right order, and satisfaction of the previous age. And if they are Bhagavata, like Nandivarman Pallavamalla, they may also gain glory and kingship.

God as Place

The transcendent Vasudeva is person, certainly, but He is also "place" or "presence" in an extended spatial sense. The Supremely Transcendent Person (*parama mahapurusha*) is also thought of as the "Pervading Actor's Supreme Home" (*vishnor dhama parama*), as the "place" that Krishna tells Arjuna is his Highest Home (*BP* 3.11.42; BG 8.21; 10.12–13; 15.6). God as Highest Home or extended presence is called Vaikuntha Dhama, which means the "home without ignorance" or "the presence penetrating everywhere" or "the invincible realm."[8] The visual depiction of God at Home portrays Vasudeva sitting or reclining on the Snake, whose spreading hoods shelter Him like an open umbrella, because this endless and brilliant light is His Supreme Home constituted of white jnana.

God as Father and Mother

This brings us to the Bhagavata belief that the Supreme Person is father and mother together.[9] Within Vasudeva's unity, "he" implies "she" and "she" implies "he." God's feminine dimension is the Goddess (*devi*). She, too, has many names, the most characteristic being Shri and Lakshmi, for she is majesty (*shri*) whose mark is wealth (*lakshmi*). But she is also Bhumidevi, because she is the material realm (*bhumi*); and she is Mahamaya, because she is transcendent and magical creativity (*maya*).

Vasudeva is pure consciousness and Devi is Vasudeva's personality or "I-ness." She is the thought within his omniscience. She exists because of him and depends on him, just as our thought depends upon our consciousness. Conversely, he depends on her, because he achieves everything—all that he thinks—only through her as his thoughts manifested. Devi is Vasudeva's power to intend an act (*kriyashakti*); and at the same time, she is the power to bring this act into being (*bhutishakti*). As conscious intent she resembles fire (*agni*), and as fruitful act she resembles liquid (*soma*), for in esoteric analysis, fire produces liquid, and liquid produces everything of earth.[10]

Whenever we speak of "him" acting, therefore, we must always understand that the actor in fact is "she." He empowers her because of his presence as omniscient consciousness in the same way as a magnet empowers iron filings by its presence, or a king empowers his ministers and generals through his authority. Subjects commonly say the king won a battle, when in fact he remained in the palace and his general on the field led the fighting. The ruler won because the general possessed his authority to put his will into effect in his name. Vasudeva similarly empowers Devi to act in his name.

In common with the Shaiva Agama, the Pancharatra Agama teaches that in relation to the universe, Vasudeva performs five acts by means of Devi. First, in a "place" within his omniscient and unified knowledge, he conceals himself. Within this concealed "place" he forms directional space and chronological time into spacetime and all its contents. He sustains what he has formed. He also reveals himself to some beings within spacetime. Finally, he devolves it all and the "place" disappears. Again, only he and she exist.

Repeated metaphors articulate this doctrine. One is agricultural. The farmer (male) knows his field (female), knows where to plow it, and knows when to plant his seed. Once planted, the farmer watches and guards the field as she transforms his seed into plants that produce food (*anna*). The obvious sexual dimension of this metaphor is also important. The king in the royal bed plants his seed in the queen's womb in order to produce a son as heir. He watches and protects her as she gestates his seed into a human being. Insofar as his seed is an embryonic form of himself (*garbha*), the king is "reborn" through her as the prince. In this way the queen becomes the king's "mother."

This ancient and salient idea is basic to the rites of engendering a king (*rajasuya*). Shakuntala articulates it to King Dushyanta in the ancient story of the birth of their son Bharata. As J. A. B. van Buitenen translates her speech to Dushyanta: "A husband enters his wife and is reborn from her—thus the old poets know this as a wife's wifehood. . . . A son, the wise say, is the man himself born from himself; therefore a man will look upon the mother of his son as his own mother. The son born from his wife is as a man's face in a mirror; and looking at him brings as much joy to a father as finding heaven brings to a saint" (van Buitenen 1959: 167). The queen fulfills her role as wife by giving birth to her husband as her son. But in order to obtain his embryo she must use

passion skillfully, because she must enable him to lose his self-discipline, become sexually aroused, and release his seed into her. A useful aid in ancient royal courts is liquor (*sura*).

These metaphors are used to illustrate a process beyond human knowing. By means of Devi, Vasudeva voluntarily becomes "inebriated" and obscures his unified jnana so that he "sees double." Devi now makes herself available to him and receives his embryonic "seed" into her body, where she gestates it into their son the prince, whom they name Brahma. The seer named Kapila, who is believed to embody the mode of consciousness called "extinction" (*nirvana*) to teach samkhya ideas and bhaktiyoga (*BP* 3.25.28–31), summarizes this activity within God this way:

> The beginningless Self (*atman*) is Person (*purusha*) without qualities (*guna*) and transcendent to matter (*prakriti*). His own light illuminates Him from within and is full of everything. Out of play (*lila*), He who is omnipresent (*vibhuh*) resorts to subtle matter that is divine and made of qualities (*guna*)—subtle matter approaches Him, as it were, and makes Herself available to Him. Their progeny, formed from her marvelous qualities, look at emerging matter, are bewildered by it, and knowledge of Him in this world instantly hides from them. (*BP* 3.26.3–5)

Brahma is the first of their progeny, the crown prince, so to speak. But just as Kapila says, he is born without knowing his parents despite his name. *Brahma* (with a long *a* at the end) is the masculine form of *brahman*, which means "growth," "expansion," or "evolution," and denotes primordial being abstractly. In Bhagavata theology this abstract *brahman* is actually the Ancient Couple: param brahma, or *brahman* as supreme, is Father, and maha brahma, or *brahman* as great, is Mother (*BG* 10.12; 13.12; 14.3–4). Brahma the prince is named after both parents. He is Vasudeva the father reborn through Devi the mother, but as an ignorant son. Brahma is God's ego; he is consciousness deluded by the sense of "This I am" (*ahamkarana*) and propelled by passion (*rajas*). To live his life as God's deluded ego, Brahma transforms his own body into the universe of directional space and lunar-solar time, which is therefore known as Brahma's sphere (*brahmanda*). We may call it spacetime, because directional space and chronological time form a single body for him. Brahma leads his life of days and nights under his father's imperial authority and his mother's unblinking gaze. The end of his night (*ratra*) when he arises for another of his days is known as Brahma's hour (*brahmamuhurta*). This is the hour (*hora*) Brahma awakens to allow all things potential to become actual; seeds planted by intentional action (*karma*) in his previous day now ripen into the fruit (*phala*) of his new day. A similar hour ends the night among devas and asuras, among the ancestral manes (*pitri*), and among humans. In each case this hour embodies the potential from which all possibilities of the day develop.

In early Tamil poetry, Vasudeva with Devi is known as Tirumal. Krishna and Vishnu are both known as Mal, which means, as Kamil Zvelebil observes, "The Dark One" or "The Great One" (Zvelebil 1977: 238–241). *Mal* denotes God's significant features: as "The Great One" (*mal*), he is the Bhagavan Vasudeva, and as "The Dark One" (*mal*), he is Krishna. The Sanskrit word *shri* in Tamil is *tiru*, and *tiru* it is prefixed to *mal* to form the name Tirumal. Zvelebil suggests it denotes "The Holy (or Blessed) Dark One." But in Bhagavata terms it denotes the Bhagavan as the Ancient Couple, "Majestic Devi with the Great and Dark Vasudeva."

Tirumal may also be glossed as the Shri Bhagavan, "Majesty with the Possessor of Wealth (*Bhaga*)." This name appears in the title of the most authoritative collection of ancient lore (*purana*) of the Bhagavata Dharma, the *Shrimad Bhagavata Purana*. Its name literally means "ancient lore (*purana*) pertaining to the slave of the Bhagavan (*bhagavata*) who possesses majesty (*shri*)." In this case the slave is the consecrated king together with his queen, a royal couple representing Tirumal to its realm in the way an enslaved couple may represent its master if he so chooses.

The Doctrine of Formation (*Vyuha*)

The process by which Narayana Vasudeva turns His self into spacetime is explained by the Pancharatra doctrine of vyuha. The word *vyuha*, often translated as "emanation," also means "re-arrangement" or "formation." *Vyuha*, for example, is used in the *Mahabharata* for the formations that the armies of the Pandavas and Kauravas make on each day of battle to achieve strategic goals. When an army makes a specific formation (*vyuha*), it remains a single army, but is rearranged for a particular purpose. Similarly, when God makes a formation (*vyuha*), He remains single, but is arranged for a particular purpose. The difference, of course, is that whereas an army rearranges its component warriors to effect a specific formation, God rearranges the contents of consciousness through yogamaya. Each time, however, God is fully present in each formation even though its particular "shape" conceals the other formations He makes.

Vasudeva as supreme (*para*) and Vasudeva as formation (*vyuha*) differ only in relation to the beings produced. The supreme Vasudeva cannot be seen from within spacetime any more than a fetus can see the mother carrying it. But Vasudeva as formation can be seen if, to continue the metaphor, the fetus is born an infant. This birth occurs for Bhagavatas through the rites of consecration (*diksha*). But perception of Vasudeva as formation comes only from the disciplined way of life (*sadhana*) the consecrated devotee (*sadhaka*) must follow, and even then few attain it. Only the exceptional sadhaka like Chatakopan clearly sees God in this lifetime.

Vasudeva as formation produces his body, its contents, and its actions through three specific rearrangements of himself in a specific sequence. The primary Vasudeva formation first changes into the formation called the Plower (Samkarshana). He then changes this formation into the formation called the Pre-eminently Mighty (Pradyumna). He changes this formation into the formation called the Unobstructed (Aniruddha). By means of these three formations He also produces twelve material forms (*murti*) interior to them (*vyuha-antara*). We shall discuss the formations and their interior formations when we turn to the vimana in chapter 5.

The Structure of the Person

Bhagavata Dharma accepts a concept of the human person (*purusha*) shared widely by religions that base themselves on Veda. It lies at the heart of this temple and of its liturgies and deserves careful attention. The portion of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* called Brahmavalli (*TU* 2) teaches it. The Brahmavalli analyzes a man who sits cross-legged in a stable posture of yoga, faces north, and performs rites of the Atharva-angirasas.[11] He is the *brahman* priest of shrauta sacrifices responsible for the correct performance by all other priests and therefore knows all four Veda collections (*samhita*). He sits south of the high altar (*uttara vedi*), faces north, and employs mantras from the *Atharva-angirasa* collection.

The scripture begins by using a mandala to describe this *brahman* priest as he is visible to any viewer (Figure 2.1). It then describes him in terms of five layers of matter, four of which are dimensions of the man invisible to us because they constitute his soul (*jiva*). The mandala is a map that begins as a point. The point extends in the cardinal directions as two equally long axes. One axis runs west to east, the other runs north to south. The axes intersect at

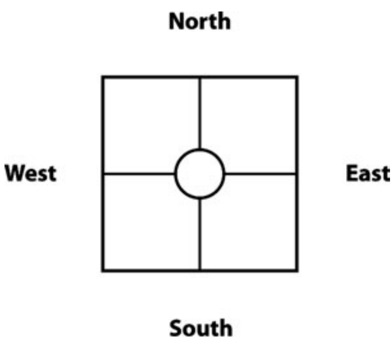


FIGURE 2.1. The mandala describing the *brahman* priest of shrauta sacrifices. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

the center. Above the center is the point from which they emerge. The mandala thus depicts five directions normally described clockwise: east, south, west, north, and the center, which may also denote the apex.

The scripture uses the mandala's two axes to describe the yogin's visible body as he sits facing north. Its north-south axis forms his vertical alignment. The southern end of the axis is his head, the center of the axis is his torso pillar, and the northern end of the axis is his supporting posterior.[12] The west-east axis forms his horizontal alignment from shoulder to shoulder. The western end of the axis is his left side, the center is his torso pillar, and the eastern end is his right side.

Five Material Sheaths as Persons

The five layers of matter (*prakriti*) that constitute the human person are called sheaths (*kosha*) (Figure 2.2). Because matter is constantly in motion, these sheaths are ever-moving material patterns that remain distinct even as they mingle with each other. The Brahmavalli says that each sheath is a person (*purusha*; *TU* 2.1–6), which of course means that this man sitting in yoga performance is fivefold. Each of his material persons has the same shape, each envelops the person composed of matter less dense than its matter, and each permeates the person enveloping it. The sequence of these sheathlike persons moves from the visible body made of flesh and bone inwardly through more refined invisible bodies to end with the most refined body of all. This final sheathlike person envelops the nonmaterial atman, the yogin's Self.

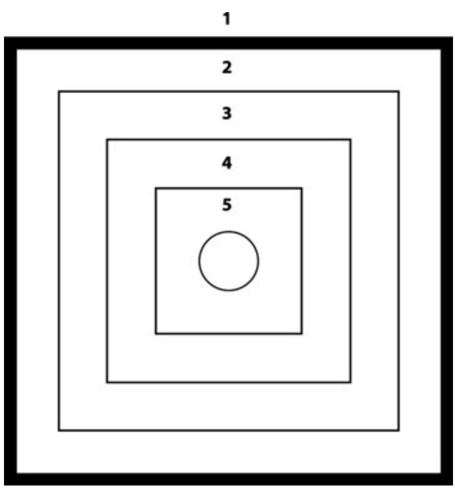


FIGURE 2.2. The five layers of matter (*prakriti*) that constitute the human person. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

SHEATH 1. The first person is the one visible to another person or to himself in a mirror. He is made of the taste or essence of food (*annarasamaya*), hair grows on his head, and his vertical and horizontal alignments follow the mandala described above.

SHEATH 2. The second person, within the flesh-and-bone person, permeates it as the person made of life-breath (*pranamaya*). His head is life-breath itself (*pranaeva*). His right side is breath inhaled through the mouth to permeate his whole body (*vyana*). His left side is breath expelled down and out through his anus (*apana*). His torso is space (*akasha*). And his supporting posterior is earth (*prithvi*).

SHEATH 3. Within the life-breath person and permeating him is the third person made of mind or mental activity (*manasmaya*). Most people's mental activity consists of widely varied subjects, but since this yogin is the *brahman* priest of shrauta rites, Veda's four compilations construct him. The *Yajus* formulas are his head, the *Rig* poems are his right side, the *Sama* chants are his left side, the rules of substitution (*adesha*) are his torso, and the *Atharva-angirasas* are his supporting posterior.

SHEATH 4. Within the mind person and permeating him is the person made of discriminative or subject-object knowledge (*vijnanamaya*). His head is faith (*shraddha*), his right side is true order (*rita*), his left side is true being (*satya*), his torso is consciousness unified (*yoga*), and his supporting posterior is performance (*mahas*).

SHEATH 5. The fifth person is made of joy (*anandamaya*) and permeates the person of discriminative knowledge. His head is pleasure (*priya*), his right side is delight (*moda*), his left side is thrill (*pramoda*), his torso is joy (*ananda*), and his supporting posterior is *brahman*. *Brahman* as his atman of pure consciousness (*chit*) is at the bottom of the spine.[13]

When we combine this yogin's vertical and horizontal alignments with his five material persons and transfer them to a single plane, the mandala mapping of this particular human person emerges in a complex manner (Figure 2.3). These ideas about what constitutes a person will be useful for later reference. More immediately important is the way these five person-sheaths are arranged in three sets of material bodies (*sharira*).

The Five Person-Sheaths as Three Sets of Bodies

SET ONE. The first set is the single person of the gross material body perceived by others and seen by oneself in a mirror. It is the body of matter in its most

North
1. posterior of flesh and bone
2. Earth
3. *Atharva-Angirasas*
4. performance
5. Brahman

West	**Center**	**East**
1. left side	1. torso	1. right side
2. in-breath	2. space	2. inter-breath
3. *Sama Veda*	3. substitution	3. *Rig Veda*
4. true reality	4. yoga	4. true order
5. thrill	5. joy	5. delight

South
1. head
2. life breath
3. *Yajur Veda*
4. faith
5. pleasure

FIGURE 2.3. Mandala mapping of yogin's vertical and horizontal alignments with his five material persons. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

dense or gross form (*sthula-sharira*). It begins as an embryo and ends as a corpse burning on the cremation pyre.

SET TWO. The second set includes the remaining four persons. It constitutes the soul, which is called the "living" (*jiva*).[14] The soul is composed of matter, but it is invisible to perception through the organs of the gross body. It is a body of subtle or invisible matter (*sukshma-sharira*).

SET THREE. The third set is a single person within the subtle-body soul. It is the person comprised of joy enveloping the atman directly. This finest mode of matter is called the body of causation or causal subtle body (*karana-sukshma-sharira*). It is causal because it carries the "seeds" the person has planted through intentional action (*karman*). When the soul leaves the gross body at death, the person of life-breath (*prana*) merges with the wind (*vayu*). The person of mental activity devolves into the person of subject-object consciousness, who then devolves into the person of joy. This threefold mode of the soul collapsed into a single material person continues to be alive (*jiva*), but now as the "departed" (*preta*). It carries the "seeds" that will determine the "pattern" the preta will follow when it becomes time for it to weave a new "garment" for the soul (*BG* 2.22).

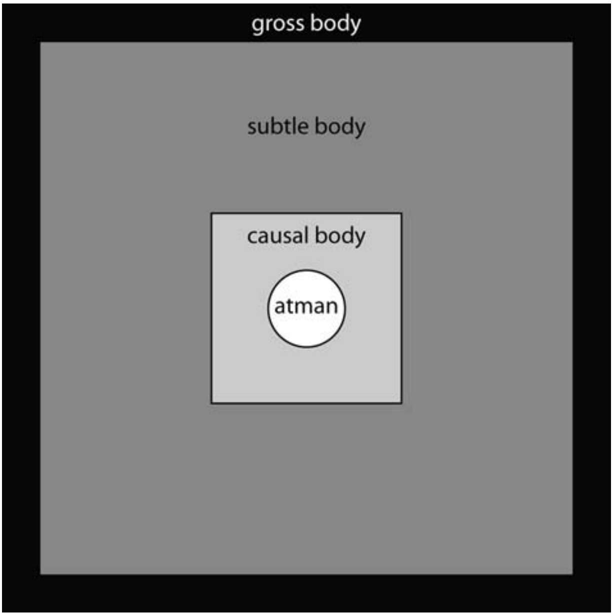


FIGURE 2.4. The three sets of bodies. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

Figure 2.4 diagrams this set of three bodies, which will be considered again in chapter 7. These three sets of five sheathlike persons will be with us throughout this study, for they inform architecture, liturgy, and literature. Moreover, they are important to the concept of inner vision or dhyana.

Inner Vision (*Dhyana*)

Teachings about Vasudeva, his formations, and his bodies are believed to derive from adepts or seers who achieve skill in inner vision (*dhyana*). Inner vision is a fundamental part of the discipline of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*), and the *Bhagavata Purana* frequently describes it. Dhyana pervades the poems of the Alvars, whose use of it most likely followed Agama rites now found in texts associated with the Emperor's Vishnu-house, such as the *Satvata-samhita*, the *Jayakhya-samhita*, the *Padma-samhita*, and the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita*.[15]

The practice of inner vision begins with the discipline of the gross and subtle bodies through yoga. The adept practitioner of yoga (*yogin*) learns to enter a state of unified consciousness (*yoga*) that allows an internally unified perception called enstasy (*samadhi*). Enstasy results when waking consciousness in the person of the gross body unites with the person of life breath, the person of mental activity, and the person of subject-object perception to join the person of joy. The yogin employs his mental activity and his subject-object

perception to visualize forms of God without looking outward through the sense organs of the gross physical body. By penetrating the forms he visualizes and entering the person of joy, who stands beyond both his perception of the object, he enters into enstatic consciousness (*samadhi*).

In some cases, for example among seers like Narada, Vasudeva may appear to the yogin's joyous consciousness in a shape (*rupa*) that will benefit others who seek him. When the yogin returns to waking consciousness, he or she teaches the vision to others, as Narada did. This revealed vision then passes down through the knowledge called Agama. Gurus will teach it to their disciples so they may recreate it in their own minds and mentally worship it as part of their sadhana. Devout participation in God through enstasy is the highest mode of worship in Bhagavata Dharma. It may eventually lead to the direct perception—while awake—of God in all things and of all things in God. At death enstasy may lead the preta into a highly pure gross body for a final birth and death, or may lead it instead to "extinction in *brahman*" (*brahmanirvana*; *BG* 2.54–72; 6).

Nevertheless, inner vision is very difficult for most people to practice in this dark and passionate Kali Yuga. A less effective but more easily attainable alternative is to use ordinary eyesight to gaze on Vasudeva's many revealed shapes, which painters, plasterers, wood carvers, and sculptors make into material forms (*murti*) which may serve as icons (*archa*). Devotees directing their visual attention to these grossly material bodies of God may worship easily. They may now employ the full range of their body, mind, and speech to harness their consciousness and guide it to the icon for devout participation in God. One example of such a Kali Yuga adaptation of bhaktiyoga is an architectural complex as richly envisioned and carefully executed as the Emperor's Vishnu-house, which Tirumangai wrote about in the Tamil poem we should now examine.

3

The Poem

The original impetus for this study was Tirumangai's poem about the Parameccuravinnagaram (*PT* 2.9). His unique division between God in the first two lines of the stanza and emperor in the second two, and the complementary unique division in the temple between God as the vimana and king in the dynastic history on the prakara wall form the germ of this extended project. This chapter focuses on the poem, and the next chapter on Nandivarman Pallavamalla's career. These two will prepare us for the Vishnu-house itself.

In order to demonstrate the poem's structure I have translated its ten stanzas with attention to their thematic sequence and their liturgical, iconic, and historical meanings. (The Tamil original may be found in Appendix 5.) I am not a poet and have not tried to replicate Tirumangai's poetic aesthetics. The notes in the right-hand column identifying the stanzas are not in the original, but are added for the sake of clarity in our later discussion. I provide a gloss for each stanza to clarify details of meaning and translation. Finally, the name Kanchi also has the form Kacci, and I have retained Tirumangai's use of the latter. He signs his name with the title Kalikanri, which means "He puts down Kali with a mighty hand." This title most likely refers to his skillful generation of bhakti in this dark Kali Yuga by means of poems crafted of refined pure Tamil.

STANZA ONE

Bottom-Floor Sanctum

The Speaker is the substance
Of the words He speaks, *Narayana emanates*

Is Taste, Touch, Speech, Smell, and Sight,	*his subtle body,*
Is auspicious Hara,	
Is Naranan,	*rules Shiva and Brahma*
Is Brahma with four faces	
And Kacci, beautiful in the rich expanse	*and dwells in Kanchi*
Of her realm, is His place,	*as black stone icon sitting in the sanctum,*
There where its many subjects shout	*Nandivarman is*
"The Ruler of Pallavas!"	*acclaimed* Pallavan
"The Ruler of Cheras!"	*and* Villavan
And numerous kings prostrate	*as subordinate rulers*
To the victory anklet of this	*acknowledge his imperial*
Pallava Lord of noble Mallas	*status, and Pallavamalla builds a*
Who built the Emperor's Vishnu-house	*a residence for his*
To be His home.	*Master.*

Kalikanri begins by connecting the Bhagavan's status as Supreme Ruler to Nandivarman's Bhagavata status as Supreme Ruler. This connection continues throughout the poem to express Kalikanri's belief that his emperor rules righteously as the consecrated slave representing the Bhagavan. I have kept Kalikanri's word order in the phrase, "is auspicious Hara, is Naranan, is Brahma with four faces," because this order replicates the depictions of Vasudeva's three vyuha formations on the bottom-floor sanctum. The Plower facing north, the Pre-eminently Mighty facing east, and the Unobstructed facing south each has smaller depictions of Shiva to His left and Brahma with four faces to His right. God's larger central position means He is the underlying cause and controller of the other two. Kalikanri's use of Naranan for Narayana may reflect his ritual class satus (*varna*). When, through diksha consecration, Shudras receive the eight-syllable mantra, *Om namo narayanaya*, they are to recite it with only seven syllables, that is, *Om namo narayana*. This may be one reason he uses Naranan rather than Narayan. Tirumangai records Nandivarman's personal name, Pallavamalla, with the words "Pallava Lord of noble Mallas."

STANZA TWO

The vast Sky forever black,	*Narayana is Krishna*
The Lights of Sun and Moon,	*who sustains the cosmos*
The Earth and her Mountains	*in the lotus at His*
All continue at the navel	*navel,*

Of Kannan with the Lotus Eyes,
Whose place is splendid Kacci
With her tall surrounding walls,

Where the Owner of the
Hard Stone and strong Bow
  that scorched the valor
  of the Southern King
  steady in chariots
  during a battle
  on enemy ground
Continues as Pallava Sovereign
Here on earth where he built
The Emperor's Vishnu-house.

the emperor's Krishna icon stands in the top sanctum to embody the tejas that defeated the Pandyan's alliance.

Kalikanri uses *kannan* as a double entendre: "he has eyes" and "Krishna" (from the Prakrit *kanha*). I have translated both meanings. "Hard stone" and "strong bow" translate *tinchilai*, another double entendre. *Chilai* means "bow" and, as the Sanskrit *shila*, means "stone." In Tamil, *shila/chilai* may denote an icon carved of stone, in this case black stone. This hard black stone icon identifies Kannan of the stanza's first half with Krishna as the black stone icon that originally stood in the top-floor sanctum of the vimana. It embodied the scorching tejas of the strong bow believed to have caused the defeat of the Pandya alliance. A scene carved on the prakara walkway illustrates this doctrine and will be discussed in chapter 4.

STANZA THREE

Middle-Floor Sanctum

In a time long ago
He lay down on a soft sturdy bed,
An immense shape in the Ocean
The color of black gem
Who gives boons here in Kacci
With a necklace of villas

Naraynṇa reclining on the Snake in primordial waters sleeps in the sanctum as a black stone icon,

Belonging to the Pallava Sovereign
Who built the Emperor's
    Vishnu-house
  after those amassed in Mannai
  with spears hankering for flesh
  on their long mouths
  fell apart early in battle

Nandivarman receives the boon of burning tejas to defeat an alliance at Netuvayil.

one day at Netuvayil
from his red-hot heat.

I have translated both meanings of the word *netuvayil*; it is a place name that also means "in the long mouth." According to the Velvikkudi and Sinnamannur copper plates, the Pallavas and Pandyas fought at Mannai and Netuvayil (Gopalan 1928: 120–124). According to T. V. Mahalingam, all the battles in these copper plates were fought before Nandivarman's thirty-third year of reign (ca. 764; Mahalingam 1969: 159, 178). He argues that Mannai was in the Bangalore district and was the Rashtrakuta capital of Ganga territory. The Velvikkudi copper plates name Netuvayil along with a place called Mannikkuricchi, which may correspond to the Mannaikuti named in the Udayendiram copper plates of ca. 757, and to Kalikanri's Mannai in this stanza. The phrase "from his red-hot heat" is my translation of *parantavan*, a Tamil title; derived from the Sanskrit *paramtapas*, it means "he possesses the supreme heat that defeats another."

STANZA FOUR

The cosmos and its eight directions, Earth with her billowing waters Along with sky, fire, wind and such, My Father ate, The Lord whose place is Kacci, Brilliant from the glowing light On each mansion floor,	*In order to beget a new cosmos Narayana ate the old one through fire and it became a lotus blossom closed at His navel as He sleeps,*
There in the Vishnu-house Which the emperor built After a battle long ago When the lotus formed by the rebels Suddenly fell apart As they fled his sweeping anger.	*Rebels clustered in the lotus formation flee Nandivarman's attacking forces.*

"Lotus formation" translates *intaikkulam* as "lotus" (*intai*) and "an assembled group" (*kulam*). "The Lotus" is a name for a specific battle formation attributed to Shiva's son Skanda. Tirumangai uses it to link Narayana's destruction of the previous cosmos in order to beget a new one with his emperor's routing of the rebel forces in order to begin a new imperial rule.

STANZA FIVE

The elephant's arm is a hollow tube And his leg is thick and sturdy, But it hurt badly until	*Hari rescues Gajendra as depicted at the western corner of the sanctum's north-facing wall,*

He cured it, He who
Plunged one day into
A pool of blooming flowers
To scare the snake in its water,
He whose place is beautiful Kacci
Encircled by cooling ponds,

Gopala Krishna dances on the the snake Kaliya as depicted at the eastern corner of the same wall,

There in the Emperor's
Vishnu-house
Built by the Sovereign of Pallavas
after the day he marched
at the head of battle
with Cobra in hand
to astonish the Southern King
of fragrant groves
and rampart walls high as
mountains.

Nandivarman's forces take control of Pampurnatu, the region of Nandipuram near modern Kumbhakonam, and banish the coalition led by the Pandyan.

Although "with Cobra in hand" could mean that Nandivarman's troops carried a cobra banner into battle,[1] it more likely means that he had regained control of Pampurnatu, "Country of Cobra Village" (*pambu-ur-natu*), referred to here simply as Cobra (*pampu*). Pampurnatu is an ancient name for the region of modern Kumbhakonam in the Kaveri delta, the location of Nandivarman's subcapital called Nandi's Town, or Nandipuram.[2] The Pandyan Maravarma Rajasimha supported Nandivarman's rival kinsman, whom he called Chitramaya Pallavaraja, and Chitramaya beseiged him in Nandipuram. But when Nandivarman's general, Udayachandra, killed Chitramaya with his sword he routed the rebel forces, to the Pandyan's astonishment, Tirumangai says. The tall rampart walls surrounding the Pandyan's capital of Maturai continues this cobra theme, for at the time Maturai was also known as Alavay, "mouth of poison," which refers to a snake coiled with its tail in its mouth to indicate Maturai's boundaries (Shulman 1980: 122–131).

STANZA SIX

One day, in the shape of a lion
With nails sharp as diamond,
The Lord fighting the Valorous
One
Clawed his waist and tore it open,
And in beautiful Kacci

Man-lion seizes the asura king Hiranyakashipu as depicted in Panel 8 of this north-facing side, and Panel 9 depicts Man-lion ripping him open at his navel;

Encircled by mansions
He has His place,

The Vishnu-house which the
Emperor serves,
The Sovereign who rules the
Pallavas
In the shade of his White
Umbrella
after he raised
the Spear and Banner
of the khatvanga
spine of bones
high above the army.

Nandivarman rules righteously because of the tejas embodied by the khatvanga, carried into battle, the staff Goddess Kali holds when she emerges as anger from the forehead of Goddess Durga.

"Serves" translates *paninta* in the phrase repeated at the end of each of the first nine stanzas: *paninta parameccuravinnagaram. Paninta* refers both to building and to serving.

The khatvanga is an implement important in Tantra rites, and Tirumangai says Nandivarman's army used it to defeat his opponents. Like the spine, it is a column topped by a skull. Goddess Kali holds it when she emerges from the forehead of Goddess Chandika Durga to embody her anger (*DM* 7.5–7 in Coburn 1991). According to the tenth label of the inscription on the prakara's southern side discussed in the next chapter, Pallavamalla formally viewed this khatvanga at his unction as Nandivarman. Tirumangai appears to refer to it as a "banner resembling the spinal column raised on a spear."

The phrase I translate as "the banner of the khatvanga spine of bones" is *vitaval-koti-verpatal.* C. Minakshi interprets *vita* to be *vitai* (bull) and translates the phrase to mean "triumphant bull-banner and the spear weapon" (Minakshi 1977: 55). I prefer to keep the word unchanged. Two words in this phrase are clear: *verpatai* commonly means "spear weapon" and *koti* commonly means "banner," "flag," "standard," and "streamer." The problem is the meaning of *vitavel* composed of *vita* and *vel.* As a verb, *vel* means "to conquer," "to destroy," and "to resemble." As a noun, *vita* from *vitam* means poison (*visha*). But it can also be a form of *vittam,* which the *Tamil Lexicon* says means "crossbeam," "anything put across," and "the body"; and it cites Tirumular's use of the word in *Tirumantiram* 2904.

But according to the explanation of this stanza of the *Tirumantiram* by P. Iramanata Pillai and A. Citamparanar (which is number 2863 in their edition), *vittam* does not mean body but the sushumna column in the subtle body. This is important, because the sushumna column in the subtle body runs parallel to the spinal column in the gross body and may be represented by it. See the comments by P. Iramanata Pillai and A. Citamparanar on *Tirumantiram muvayiram*: 2863 in Tirumala Nayanar 1980: 1192–1193. For a discussion of the khatvanga that explains the Tamil Lexicon's definition of *vittam,* see Wayman 1973: 122–126.

STANZA SEVEN

One day, when Great Bali
Of the tall glittering crown
Sponsored a great sacrifice,
He took a dwarf's shape,
And when water poured out
To seal the gift
Swindled him of this vast world—
His place is Kacci blazing in all
Directions with Agni's flaming
mouths,

Vamana the Dwarf at Bali's horse sacrifice, as depicted in Panel SP2 on the porch's south side, receives Bali's gift of three steps of land; as depicted in the next panel on the sanctuary (Panel 15), he steps above heaven as Trivikrama, the Thrice-strider;

There in the Vishnu-house
The Emperor built
After he proclaimed victory
For his many troops
And shook the King of the South
who rules the world,
And Karur of the Virgin's
Tall rampart wall.

Nandivarman's alliance threatened both the Pandyan of Madurai and the Cheran of Karur, a durga fortress protected by the virgin Goddess Durga.

Tirumangai connects Dwarf swindling Bali of his world to Nandivarman taking the Pandyan's world through battle. Bali's ritual gift (*dana*) is finalized when he pours water over Dwarf's hand. Tirumangai refers to this rite by chalamotu, "with water," using *chalam* as the Sanskrit *jala*. But *chalam* also means "deceit," and the poet intends this meaning too, so I have translated *chalamotu* to mean both "with water" and "with deceit." *Kanni* or "virgin" refers to Goddess Chandika Durga in the *Devi Mahatmya*, and through her to Karur as a durga, which is a fortress or fortified town. Her virgin status means her tejas is intensely "hot," not yet "cooled" by marriage to Shiva.

STANZA EIGHT

Once a King of vigor
With the Umbrella of a hero
And an army of monkeys
Blocked the sea with mountains—
He is my Father the Lord
Whose place in beautiful Kacci
Ringed by ornate halls

Kalikanri Tirumangai returns to the side facing north, where the second panel depicts Rama with Lakshmana confronting Ocean who obstructs their crossing to Lanka;

Is the Emperor's Vishnu-house
Served by the Sovereign of Pallavas
who seized the Spear of War

Nandivarman at Nenmeli gains

in his right hand
and with the power of an army
frightened in Nenmeli
the virile Villavan bull,
the Cheran who owns the Bow.

sovereignty over the Cheran,
whose Bow emblem gives him the
title Villavan, "Owner of the
Bow," appearing as his title
in the first stanza.

Rama son of Dasharatha with his brother Lakshmana angrily confronted Ocean on his way to Lanka to slay Ravana. Only after Ocean's submission did he build the bridge to Lanka and kill its king. Tirumangai links this event to Nandivarman's subjugation of Chera opponents, whose capital is Karur of the previous stanza. This explains the acclamation of Nandivarman Pallavamalla as Owner of the Bow (*villavan*) in stanza one and brings us full circle to his status as enthroned emperor.

Tirumangai returns to the northern wall for the depiction of Rama to end his listing of Nandivarman's victories. He does this, as we shall see in later chapters, because the story of Rama's angry encounter with Ocean illustrated by this panel represents the acharya's continuing discipline of the devotee consecrated as a Bhagavata. After his diksha consecration, a ritual rebirth, he will sustain a dependent relation to his acharya as if the latter were his father and mother combined in one person. As a Bhagavata ruler, Nandivarman depended on his acharya to conduct liturgical matters on his behalf, including the liturgies that brought about all the victories concluded by this stanza. Rama confronting Ocean and then crossing to Lanka represents his acharya; the source of his acharya's liturgical success, however, is Krishna, and he appears in the next stanza.

STANZA NINE

Top-Floor Sanctum

Pinnai's forehead is a
Gleaming crescent moon
And she's a cousin,
So long ago in battle
He subdued deceiving Lust
In the shape of seven bulls,
And now owns beautiful Kacci
With its surrounding wealth

Gopala Krishna subdues Lust
(Mal) disguised as seven bulls to
win Pinnai as his bride, for she
is his cousin-to-be-married; he
stands as the black stone icon
inside the sanctum;

Where the Sovereign of Pallavas
Serves the Vishnu-house he built
after he conquered those
angry kings with swords
stained black from blood

Nandivarman rules as Emperor
possessing the Drum and Conch
employed during the battles
whose victory established
his imperial status.

As the Emperor who owns
The Drum with a bitter mouth
And the Conch with the roar
of the sea.

Tirumangai regards the enemies Nandivarman defeated as motivated by the demonic Lust (Mal) slain by Krishna in order to gain Pinnai as his bride. The word *mal* as *mahat* denotes greatness and is used for the Bhagavan; as derived from the verb *mal*, "to be confused, perturbed," *mal* denotes illusion, desire, lust, and blackness, and is used for Krishna and for the demonic lust he defeated. The seven bull shapes this Lust took parallels the "seven battles and more" noted in records of these events on copper plates. Krishna standing as a black stone icon in the top-floor sanctum, Tirumangai tells us, defeated those lusting for the throne of his imperial slave through his royal drum and conch sounded during rites of battle. Both drum and conch, like the khatvanga, were formally displayed to Pallavamalla when he received unction as Kanchipuram's ruler ca. 731. The supervisor of these rites was his acharya, represented by Rama confronting Ocean in the previous stanza.

STANZA TEN

The Pallavas' Sovereign of ancient
fame
Lives long in the land,
The Emperor who built the
Vishnu-house
Well described by Kalikanri,
Ruler of Mangai's people and her
Vast fields of abundant paddy,

The poet identifies himself as
ruling Mangai in the
paddy-rich delta of the
Kaveri River,

In this rich and beautiful garland
Of Tamil purity whose skillful
singers
(By the grace of our Great Goddess
Shri)
Shall rule with brilliance in that
shining World
Of abundant water surrounded
by the Ocean
Which thunders like the roaring
chariots
Of the kings who rule this world.

a skillful poet in Tamil
whose poem embodies shakti,
and will bring its devout
reciter to Vaikuntha on
White Island in the Ocean
of Milk, where the devotee shall
rule, like Hari red with Hari's
shape.

In this signature stanza the poet gives his title, his social identity, and the fruit of skillfully devout singing of his poem composed in a "pure" Tamil embodying shakti in the manner of a mantra. The fruit is eventual residence on White Island in the Ocean of Milk. This is emancipation known as salokya, "dwelling with God in His realm." The emancipated one will there be a ruler resembling God and greatly superior to righteous rulers on earth, including Nandivarman Pallavamalla. This is the fruit Krishna promises to anyone who does what Nandivarman did in building him a Vishnu-house. In this final stanza Tirumangai implies that Nandivarman will eventually receive this fruit. He also implies that the drainage moat surrounding the Vishnu-house is filled with water, that it is the Ocean of Milk, and that the vimana in its midst is Vaikuntha on White Island. The black stone icon sitting inside is therefore Vaikuntha Perumal.

4

The Emperor's Career Portrayed on the Prakara Wall

The Career of Nandivarman Pallavamalla

Around 731 the "emperor of Pallava kings in the Pallava lineage" died after a three-year reign. He has been identified as Parameshvaravarman II (728–731), a descendent of Paramesvaravarman I (672–700) through Narasimhavarman Rajasimha (700–728). His death may have been connected to the invasion of Kanchipuram by the Chalukya crown prince Vikramaditya II.[1] The Sanskrit praise poem (*prashasti*) of a grant by Nandivarman ca. 752 says the deceased ruler's father was Rajasimha, an emperor famous as a Supreme Maheshvara (*paramamaheshvara*) piously devoted to Brahmins (*parabrahmanyah*) (*SII* 2: 366, line 17). This title means Rajasimha had received consecration (*diksha*) according to the branch of Shaiva Agama known in his time as Shaiva Siddhanta. Rajasimha's sons did not leave an undisputed lineal descendant, and political anarchy followed. Since no Pallavan in Kanchipuram could claim undisputed succession, some members of the court went a long distance to find one to restore the "pure" line descending from Simhavarman II, who had reigned ca. 535–580.

They found such a person in a twelve-year-old boy, the youngest son of Hiranyavarman, who had descended from Simhavarman II through his second son, Bhima. Bhima had left Kanchipuram to establish his own court, and Hiranya was his descendent in the fifth generation. He was considered "pure" on his father and mother's sides and was a worshiper of Vishnu. Hiranya could not take up the position in Kanchipuram, however, but he allowed the fourth of his four Malla sons to assume the position. Hiranya's Malla sons, it

appears, were those born to his first wife; they continued the "purity" of lineage signified by the title of Malla, which means "wrestler." This Malla son was named Pallava, or Pallavamalla. As a descendent of Simhavarman, the boy qualified as "purified" (*parisuddha*) in both his paternal and maternal clans and, in addition, he was willing to leave his father's court and go to Kanchipuram.

The delegates had traveled a long way to find a successor to the throne, passing through many mountains, rivers, forests, and "depths (*gahana*)."[2] K. R. Srinivasan says they found him in a collateral Pallava line in Kongu, inland and southwest of the Pallava realm, implying that *gahana* means armies, not seas. But T. V. Mahalingam interprets *gahana* as seas and argues that they went much farther afield, to a Pallava domain in Kambujadesa, known today as Cambodia. We shall discuss that question later. Wherever they found the boy, he came from a Vaishnava, or more precisely Bhagavata, family. At his father's court was an elderly scholar of Agama (*agamika*) named Tarandikonda Bhojar, who told the king not to grieve at his son's departure, because "He has been a worshiper of the Transcendent Vishnu (*mahavishnu*) and will become an emperor (*chakravartin*)."[3]

Not all Pallavas were Mallas, for some were born of Pallava fathers and "impure" mothers, which appears to have been the case with the rival claimant to the Kanchipuram throne, whose name was probably Skandasishya Vikramavarman. When the delegation bringing the "pure" Malla drew near to Kanchipuram, supporters of his rival met them with violent opposition, but were defeated and many were killed. Skanda fled the city, but did not abandon his fight for the throne. The delegation then brought Pallavamalla into the city for his abhisheka or unction. The Brahmin ghatika or learned assembly, which was responsible for anointing Kanchipuram's rulers, in an act of religious and political significance gave him the coronation name Nandivarman. He was, this title claimed, the "son" of the first Nandivarman, the Supreme Bhagavata who two centuries earlier had fathered the royal Malla lineage now reinstated on Kanchipuram's throne by Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

There was a religious dimension to the search for a "pure" Pallava, which is not surprising given political issues of patronage and religious beliefs regarding the divine source of royal power. Until the death of Nandivarman's predecessor, Kanchipuram's more recent emperors had patronized the Shaiva Agama; Rajasimha had been consecrated a Supreme Maheshvara and his great temple recorded his commitment to the Saiva Siddhanta Path (*SII* 1: 12, stanza 5). After Nandivarman established himself firmly on the throne, he balanced Rajasimha's mountainous abode for Shiva on the city's western side with his own palace for the Bhagavan on the eastern side. These two eighth-century temples record differing beliefs regarding God as King (*devaraja*). For Rajasimha, devaraja was the Shiva linga inside the sanctum of his divine palace; for Nandivarman, devaraja was the Vasudeva icon sitting inside his divine palace. A Supreme Bhagavata had replaced a Supreme Maheshvara on the Pallava throne.

Once installed on the throne, Nandivarman Pallavamalla was now an Indra of Men (*nara-indra, narendra*). But why did he receive the name Nandivarman? The answer is found in two differing statements about his lineage. The prakara inscription discussed below says he was the son of Hiranyavarman. But a grant of ca. 752–753 says Pallavamalla Nandivarman "became his son" (*tasya putro babhuva*), which appears to refer to his immediate predecessor, Parameshvaravarman II (*SII* 2: 365–367, lines 19 and 37). To account for the apparent discrepancy between descent from Hiranyavarman and from Parameshvaravarman II, E. Hultzsch suggested that the grant might be a forgery, or that Nandivarman "thought it political" to claim to be the adopted son of his predecessor, or that the scribe who drafted the inscription used the word *putra* (son) carelessly to represent Nandivarman as Parameshvaravarman's successor and not biological heir (*SII* 2: 363).

But the prashasti statement "became his son" appears before and after a long prose passage (containing a portion in three stanzas of verse) eulogizing "Nandivarman the Master of Pallavas." This Nandivarman is not Pallavamalla, but the Supreme Bhagavata after whom he was named. The phrase "Pallavamalla Nandivarman became his son" refers to a ceremony that made him the legitimate heir to the throne in the line descending from the first Nandivarman rather than in the line descending from Parameshvaravarman I through Rajasimha and his heir Parameshvaravarman II.[4] The claim by the elderly agamika in the prakara inscription that Pallavamalla had been a worshiper of Maha Vishnu and would become a chakravartin may mean that people believed Pallavamalla to be the rebirth of the first Nandi.

This first Nandi had ruled seven generations earlier as "Shri Nandivarman, the great king of Dharma of the Pallavas belonging to the Bharadvaja gotra, a supreme Bhagavata devoted to the feet of the bappa bhattaraka."[5] As we shall later see, *bappa bhattaraka* refers to the acharya of Agama. The first Nandivarman ruling Kanchipuram, therefore, was a Supreme Bhagavata devoted to the feet of an acharya of the Pancharatra Agama, as were his heirs. His son Simhavarman II continued to rule (ca. 535–560) in Kanchipuram, as did his eldest son, Simhavishnuvarman (ca. 560–580), and their Bhagavata line continued until 672. But Bhima, Simhavarman's younger son, went elsewhere to establish his court (*SII* 2: 506), and his patronage of Pancharatra acharyas apparently continued down to Hiranya's reign early in the eighth century. This explains the presence in his court of the elderly agamika, Tarandikonda Bhojar, who must have been Hiranya's acharya.

In Kanchipuram, however, acharya patronage shifted in the court. Pallava emperors from Paramesvaravarman I (672–700) until the dynastic crisis ca. 731 were devoted to Shaiva acharyas. Apparently, the only way to restore a "pure" Pallava lineage of Bhagavatas to Kanchipuram's throne was to find a ruler belonging to an unbroken lineage of "pure" devotion to Pancharatra acharyas descending from the glorious Bhagavata ancestor, Nandivarman,

living in a court somewhere else. That was Bhima's court, where Hiranya ruled. This important memory of clan commitment to an acharya lineage was not unusual then, nor is it now. The Alvar poet Vishnuchittan (Periyalvar) says that he came from seven generations of devotees, and he may have used seven to symbolize an even larger number (*Tiruppallantu* 3). Sri Vaishnavas in contemporary India follow the Pancharatra Agama and keep careful record of their acharyas in order to trace their discipleship back to the acharya named Ramanuja in the twelfth century. Nandivarman, who firmly believed Bhagavata Dharma was fundamental to his reign, appears to have been steadfastly committed to his acharya and his acharya's family, as we shall see.

First Exile

Modern interpretations of Nandivarman Pallavamalla's reign of sixty-four or sixty-five years differ in the ways they piece together the fragmentary information available in the sources. T. V. Mahalingam conducted the most detailed analysis, and we shall follow his lead here, supplemented by other interpretations.

As noted earlier, the Chalukya crown prince, Vikramadiyta II, invaded Kanchipuram sometime around 731. After Nandivarman ascended the throne, Vikramaditya invaded again, about 733–734, not long after he had been anointed the Chalukya king.[6] Vikramaditya invaded Kanchipuram this time, Mahalingam suggests, to avenge the death of the rival to the Kanchipuram throne, whom he had supported and who had been killed by Nandivarman's forces on their way to the city. The Rajasimheshvara Temple that Rajasimha had completed about a decade earlier impressed Vikramadiyta II. He was a devotee of Shiva and after he inspected the temple's wealth he returned it all to Shiva and added gifts of his own.[7] He presumably left Kanchipuram in the hands of his Pallava protégé, who was probably Skandasishya Vikramavarman. Nandivarman later called him, perhaps derisively, the "wonderously made Pallava king" (*chitramaya pallavaraja*) (Foulkes in *IA* 8: 275, line 48).

Nandivarman fled Kanchipuram and remained in exile for twelve to fourteen years, during which he aligned himself with the Rashtrakutas at their court in the Deccan. The Rashtrakutas patronized Jainas. Nandivarman eventually married Reva, the daughter of the Rashtrakuta king, Dantidurga. Their son Dantivarman became Nandivarman's heir (see stanzas 15–17 in *SII* 2: 511). As we discussed in chapter 1, the Jaina heritage of Dantivarman's maternal line may account for the *Bhagavata Purana*'s telling of the story of the tirthankara named Rishabha.

It appears that during Nandivarman's long exile he also found support among the chieftains of agricultural lands (*mutarayar*, *muttaraiyar*) in the ancient Chola realm of the Kaveri River delta to the south. Mutaraiyars of the Khataka clan had been among those who escorted Pallavamalla into Kan-

chipuram for his unction; and muttaraiyars aligned themselves with Nandivarman throughout his career and participated in the most crucial of his battles (Govindasamy 1965: 39–44). Before the middle of the eighth century, a town among the muttaraiyars had become Pallavamalla's "subcapital" (*anupura*) and the locale of that pivotal battle. It was probably "Nandi's Town" (Nandipuram, Nandigrama), adjacent to the town of Paraiyarai, a Chola residence in the region of modern Kumbhakonam.[8]

According to Mahalingam's reconstruction, Vikramaditya II had placed (or replaced) Skandasishya Vikramavarman on the Kanchipuram throne after his second invasion ca. 733–734. We know that Skandasishya ruled from Kanchipuram as late as 745–746, because in that year he granted a village in what is now North Arcot District to a Brahmin who may have been his acharya.[9] Little is known about Skandasishya, but he may have been one of Rajasimha's sons or grandsons by a secondary wife. His own account of his lineage says he descends from Ashvatthaman and "a woman with a double tongue" (*dvijiha-amgini*) who gave birth to the first Skandasishya. She has been interpreted as a naga (Line 8 and stanzas 2 and 3 in *EI* 5.8: 51–52), which denotes both a snake and a person of low socio-ritual status. This naga maternal ancestor suggests that Skandasishya belonged to the clan of "Kanchi's Owner" (*kacchiyon*), which ruled the city prior to their intermarriage with Pallavas in the fourth century. The kacchiyon will appear again later. In any case, Pallavamalla's supporters considered Skandasishya "wonderously made" and not pure enough to rule. In contrast, other Pallava accounts, including those of Pallavamalla, say that Ashvatthaman's descendant was the first Pallava, not the first Skandasishya, and that his mother was an apsaras, a dancer in Indra's heavenly court. The difference between a naga mother and an apsaras mother suggests the difference in ritual class (*varna*) between rulers judged by Veda to be Shudras of low status (*naga*) and Shudras of high status (*apsaras*).

Skandasishya had other political weaknesses, too. Through the Western Gangas he had aligned himself with the Chalukyas of Vatapi and received the support of the invading Vikramaditya II. He also received support from other traditional Pallava foes, most notably the Pandyan named Maravarman Rajasimha (730–765). Like Skandasishya, the Chalukyan Vikramaditya and the Pandyan Maravarman Rajasimha were Shaivas. Skandasishya would not have been a sympathetic figure to many Pallava subrulers living in the muttaraiyar region over which the Pandyas and Pallavas often fought and where Nandivarman's subcapital lay.

Nandivarman Becomes Bhagavata Emperor, Second Exile

Nandivarman returned from exile in 745 or 746. His Rashtrakuta father-in-law, Dantidurga, invaded Kanchipuram and surrounded the city with his

troops. Skandasishya fled. Dantidurga's purpose, Mahalingam believes, was to oust Skandasishya and restore Nandivarman to the throne. In that year Nandivarman received a Bhagavata consecration that gave him the Tamil title "Great Being's Venerable Slave" (*perumanatikal*), analogous to "Bhagavan's Supreme Slave" (*paramabhagavata*) borne by the first Nandivarman (Mahalingam 1969: 169). Nandivarman had finally obtained true being (*satya*) as "King of Kings and Emperor" (*raja-adhiraja-parameshvara*). But his difficulties were by no means over.

Vikramaditya responded to Skandasishya's ouster by sending his son, the Chalukya crown prince Kirtivarman, to Kanchipuram. He went in his father's name, to make it the third time Vikramadiyta invaded the city. Once again Nandivarman left, and Kirtivarman gathered Kanchipuram's wealth for his father. Nandivarman returned shortly thereafter, in 746 or 747.[10] Nandivarman then waged war against Skandasishya, and the crucial battle took place at Nandi's Town (Nandipuram) among the muttaraiyars to the south. Nandivarman was camped in Nandipuram when Skandasishya and his supporting Dramila forces attacked. His general, Udayachandra, rescued him by killing Skandasishya with his sword and routing the Dramilas. Skandasishya died sometime between 747 and 753, probably earlier rather than later.

After Udayachandra had killed Skandasishya and won other battles, Nandivarman ruled firmly in Kanchipuram until his death in 795–796. Toward the end, his son Dantivarman appears to have ruled with him as crown prince (*yuvaraja*). Battles along his borders continued, of course, and his enemies included the Pandyas, the Gangas, the waning Chalukyas, and the rising Rashtrakutas. Nandivarman fought at least seven battles with the Pandyas, and late in his career (about 783) at least one with the Rashtrakutas, despite their alliance through marriage.[11]

According to Burton Stein, Nandivarman Pallavamalla shifted the language in which Pallavas talked of their royal authority. He replaced legitimacy based on descent from kings who had performed Vedic sacrifices to legitimacy based on generous ritual gifts (*dana*) that redistributed the resources of their realm. The prashasti of a grant dated 754–755, however, suggests that dana as an important source of legitimacy had begun nearly a century earlier with Mahendravarman II (668–670), for Nandivarman's court remembered him as the one who began sponsoring temples and Brahmins and used the donor's vessel in rites of giving (*dana*) (*SII* 2: 349, line 56 and note). It may even have begun with the first Nandivarman.

The ritual gift (*dana*) is a cardinal virtue for kings who follow Agama, including Buddhist rulers with whom Nandivarman's lineage claimed affinity through descent from the emperor Ashoka (*SII* 2: 347, line 33). The Chinese Buddhist monk Hsuan Tsang reported that the Buddhist emperor Harshavardhana and his predecessors followed the practice in the sixth and seventh centuries, probably in imitation of the quinquennial (*panchavarsika*) great

acts of dana attributed to Ashoka (Strong 1983: 91–96). Regional rulers like the muttaraiyar responded to these gifts by acknowledging loyalty to the giver as they retained their own status of localized dominion (Stein 1980: 296–297). This type of relationship sheds light on the loyalty of the ruler of Mangai, a Bhagavata in the old Chola region who calls himself Kalikanri and Kaliyan in his poems, but is more commonly known as the Alvar poet Tirumangai. He is an important source for this study, and two pieces of evidence allow us to date him.

The first is a grant of land Nandivarman made in the sixty-first year of his reign (792–793) to sixteen Brahmins in order to form a village in what is now the Nagapattinam Taluk of Tanjore District.[12] He made it at the request of a man named in the Sanskrit portion of the prashasti as Mangalarashtra-bharitri and in the Tamil portion as Mangalanatalvan, both of which mean "ruler of the Mangala Country." Kalikanri ruled Mangala, or Mangai, which is why he came to be known as Tirumangai.

The second piece of evidence is about his son. R. Nagaswamy reports a memorial stone found in Karur dated to the eighth or ninth century CE, which is when the Pallavas dominated this ancient Chera capital. Its inscription is in Tamil and records the death in Karur of "the son of the king Kaliyan" while rescuing his cattle (Nagaswamy 1995: 89–90). It is possible that this man was the son of the same Kaliyan or Kalikanri who ruled Mangalanatu (Mangai) and had requested land on behalf of sixteen Brahmins. Kalikanri, who composed more stanzas of Tamil poetry than any other Alvar, thus appears to have been a minor ruler subordinate to Nandivarman Pallavamalla, and to have flourished in the last half of the eighth century and perhaps into the ninth.

The Prakara Wall and the Sculpted Lions

The prakara wall, which defines the outermost boundary of the temple's mandala, creates the division between ritual impurity on the outside and ritual purity on the inside, and between the darkness of ignorance and the light of knowledge. Numerous Pallava-style lions on its exterior surface face outward toward impurity and ignorance as if to ward off these defilements from the structure (Figure I.1). These lions are of the same style as those inside the mandala. Lions carved on the pillars supporting the roof of the circumambulatory face inward toward the "moat" and the vimana; lions carved on the vimana face outward toward the "moat" and the circumambulatory. Two drawings (Figure 4.1) depict them as they appear on the pillars inside.

Why are these many Pallava-style lions placed inside and outside the temple? Are they merely adornments, or do they have ritual significance? Sculptural and textual evidence suggests an answer: When the completed temple received its complete consecration (*kumbhabhisheka*) these lions embodied

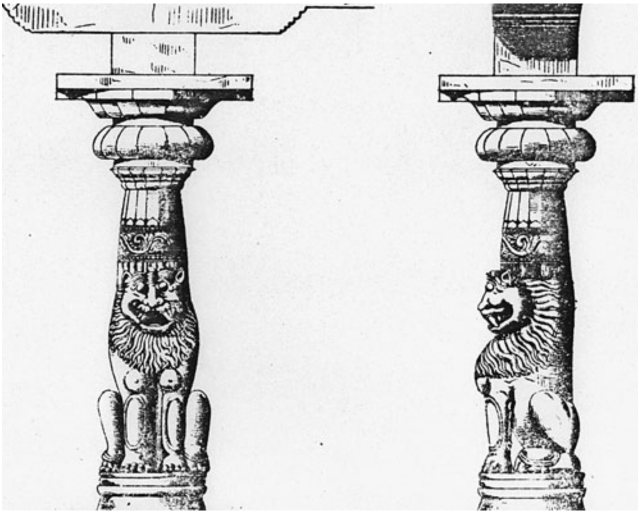


FIGURE 4.1. Pallava-style lions. From Rea 1909.

the brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) of Goddess Durga, for the lion is her mount (*vahana*). In the *Devi Mahatmyam* (Glorification of the Goddess), the seer Markandeya tells the story of Goddess Durga as the embodiment of conquering tejas or power. She first defeats the anti-deva asura named Buffalo (which gives her the title Mahishasuramardini), and then the asuras Chanda and Munda (which gives her the title Chandika). Episodes of this story are richly illustrated in seventh-century stone monuments at the Pallava port Mamallapuram. One of these is a freestanding carving of Durga's lion facing west, as illustrated in Figure 4.2. Goddess Durga sitting on the head of the asura Buffalo has been sculpted inside the chest of her lion mount: Durga sits with her left foot on Buffalo's head and her right foot on the ground. On the lion's exterior surface Durga's female companions sit in similar postures facing north and south. This sculpted arrangement visually depicts the doctrine that Durga's lion embodies the conquering tejas she embodies; the lion is an extension of the Goddess, just as we find in the *Devi Mahatmyam*. Accordingly, Pallava-style lions on the outside and the inside of the Emperor's Vishnu-house may be understood to have embodied Durga's brilliant conquering power to preserve the purity of this three-dimensional mandala built to be God's residence.

Nandivarman's Career Depicted

The official story of Pallavamalla's accession to the throne told at the time the temple was built, ca. 770, appears in sculpted panels illustrating the entire



FIGURE 4.2. Lion at Mamallapuram (left) with Durga the Slayer of Buffalo inside its chest (right). Photo by Hudson, 1998.

history of the Pallava Dynasty. The sculpted history occupies two parallel registers on all four side of the prakara. It begins at the north side of the temple entrance and moves clockwise. The panels devoted to Pallavamalla constitute the single longest sequence and include the top register on the entire south wall and both registers on the west wall's southern half. The sequence concludes with the depiction of Nandivarman Pallavamalla enthroned with his general, his acharya, his cultic instruments, and conclusive battles in the Kaveri River delta. A convincing interpretation of the hundreds of scenes depicted in detail by this sculpted program remains to be done, but C. Minakshi provides an excellent beginning (Minakshi 1941). The bottom register of sculpted panels on the south prakara wall follows a counterclockwise sequence that ends at the southeast corner. They remain unexplored.[13]

Thirteen inscriptions, written in a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit resembling the Manipravala of the later Sri Vaishnavas (see Venkatachari 1978), identify specific sculpted panels illustrating Nandivarman's story at the beginning of the south wall. They are the only inscriptions in the temple that date from Nandivarman's rule.[14] Each inscription ends with the word *itam*, meaning "place," to denote a specific panel or set of panels as the place where the event described is portrayed; for example, "that event is depicted in this place (*itam*)." Kalikanri uses *itam* the same way in his poem about the temple and Nandivarman.

The First Ten Labels of the Inscription

Not all of the inscription's thirteen labels are readable. The series begins with the death of Kanchipuram's ruler in 731, describes the search for a new king, and records Pallavamalla's acceptance of the position at the age of twelve. It then records his journey to Kanchipuram, his conflict with opponents outside the city, their defeat, and his entrance into the city. The tenth label then records his unction. I have translated the first ten labels as follows.[15]

1. The emperor of Pallava kings, who belonged to the Pallava lineage which had descended in this way [as portrayed in the previous prakara panels] became a resident of heaven and the realm was reduced to anarchy. The mattrakal, members of the ghatika (*ghatakayar*), and a ruler who is the basis of the mandala realm (*mulaprakriti*)[16] then approached Hiranyavarma Maharaja of the Katava Ruler's clan (*katavesha kula*) to ask him to become king. He was able to bear the burden of the kingdom and was purified in both clans (*ubhaya-kula-parishuddhar*). [That is depicted] here (*itam*).
2. The deputies arrived and met Hiranyavarma Maharaja. "Why have you come?" he asked. "The kingdom is in anarchy and unable to manage," they said. "You are purified in both clans and should be king." [That is depicted] here.
3. Hearing this, Hiranyavarma Maharaja sent for all the clan's Wrestlers (*kulamallar*) to ask who would go. He then asked his sons named Srimalla, Ranamalla, Samkramamalla, and Pallavamalla who among them was available. Each said, "You should rule, we will not go," until the Pallava who is our emperor bowed down and said, "I will go." [That is depicted] here.
4. Hearing this, he was happy that the good and truthful son born to enhance the glory of the Khataka clan was going to rule, but grieved about the separation, feeling amrita and poison in his heart (*hridaya*) at the same time. "My son is a boy of only twelve years," he said, "and I will not send him." Then the elder scholar of Agama (*agamika*) named Tarandikonda Bhojar (*posar*) reassured him when he said, "He has been a worshiper of Transcendent Vishnu (Mahavishnu) and will become an emperor (*chakravartin*). You should not grieve." [That is depicted] here.
5. [This inscription is fragmentary. Hiranyavarman appears to have seen something that resembled a black elephant's head (*kariyakalirinra[la]y*) and asked a question about it.]
6. Tarandikonda Bhojar showed the object presented by the attendant (*sevakan*) and said to Hiranyavarma Maharaja, "This is not an elephant's head (*kalirinralay*). These are the parts of your son's crown

(*mukutankal*)." And [the king's] fear vanished. [That is depicted] here.

7. This is where Hiranyanvarma Maharaja and Tarandikonda Bhojar gave [Pallavamalla] permission to go and he descended from the balcony (*chivikai*), venerated them, prostrated to them, and took leave [as depicted] here.[17]
8. Starting from there he traveled the way and left behind many mountains, rivers, forests, and depths (*gahana*). Hearing of this, many eminent noble men (*palla-v-atikar-aiyar*) [or the Pallavadi Araiyar][18] went out to attack him with great force (*mahabalam*), struck, killed elephants, and died near the great city of Kanchipuram [as depicted] here.
9. Hearing that his elephant was approaching [the city], the superior dependent rulers (*mahasamantar*), the leading citizens (*nagarattar*), a sovereign who is the basis of the mandala realm (*mulaprakriti*), and the Khatakka rulers of agricultural lands (*mutarayar*) went out to meet him and escort him into the palace (*koyil*) [as depicted] here.
10. After they entered the palace the assembly of ministers (*mantri-mandalam*), the superior dependent rulers, the men of the two assemblies (*ubhyaganattayar*), and the members of the ghatika (*ghatakayar*) anointed him with the name Nandivarman. Then, for display, slaves gathered the chariot's karivai umbrella, [the conch] with the voice of the sea (*samudraghosham*), the khatvanga staff (*khatvangad-dhvajam*), and the bull crest (*vrishaba-lanchanam*). After the Vitelvituku oath of majesty (*tiruvanai*)[19] was administered the unction was completed [as depicted] here.

The Depiction of the Unction as Indra of Men

The tenth label translated above identifies the depiction of the unction (*abhisheka*) that completed the transformation of the boy Pallavamalla into the Indra of Men (*narendra*) after he received the name Nandi and the warrior title varman (shield) (Figure 4.3). The final unction or bath completed his ritual birth as an Indra through the ancient ceremony of king engendering (*rajasuya*). The rajasuya described here imitated the paradigm established by Varuna, which the first emperor, named Prithu son of Vena, enacted, as did Harischandra, whose famous story is told during the ceremony.

The panel is divided horizontally into two sections. Seven male figures fill the upper section, four to the west and three to the east. They face forward with knees and bodies bent in a manner that suggests relaxed movement. The third figure from the viewer's right appears to be playing cymbals, indicating that the group is singing in the well-known bhakti manner of bhajan or sankirtana.



FIGURE 4.3. Pallavamalla's unction as Nandivarman ca. 731. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

The bottom section is divided vertically into two halves. The large figure of Pallavamalla dominates the western half. He sits upright and gazes forward. His pendant legs are spread apart, his feet rest on a footstool probably placed on a tiger skin, and his hands rest on his thighs. He wears armbands and necklaces, and an elaborate waistcloth with strands hanging down between his legs. A cord appears to descend from each side of his head, along each shoulder, to cross the center of his bare chest and pass under the opposite arm. These garments probably represent the womb from which he is born. According to the *Shatapatha Brahmana*'s account of the rajasuya, one garment is the amnion, "the inner caul of kshatra." Another is the chorion, "the outer caul of kshatra." A third is "the womb of kshatra." A headband or turban serves as "the navel of kshatra." In the sculpture the headband appears to wrap around Pallavamalla's forehead to descend as the cords crossing his chest; it probably denotes the umbilicus.

Two smaller figures behind him on each side raise their hands toward the top of Pallavamalla's head. The hair of his head is piled up as a cone exposed above the headband or turban wrapped around his forehead. The sculpture is damaged, and it is difficult to see what the two side figures hold up, but they must be wooden vessels containing the unction mixture of seventeen fluids. The rajasuya prescribes four such bowls. The figure on Pallavamalla's right is captured in the act of pouring the mixture over his hair so that it will run down his front. The figure on his left has raised his bowl to continue the "sprinkling." It is important that the unction mixture first touches his hair, which thenceforth will contain its vigor.

On the panel's eastern half, six men face the viewer. Three sit in front and three stand behind them. The inscription below the panel tells us that the body of ministers, the superior dependent rulers, the members of the two assemblies, and the members of the ghatika first anointed Pallavamalla with the name Nandivarman. Slaves then gathered together the emblems of his rule for display: the karivai umbrella for his chariot, the conch with the voice of the sea, the khatvanga staff, and the bull crest. He then took the Vitelvituku oath of kingship and received the concluding "bath" depicted in this sculpted scene.

The identification of figures in the panel with the groups named in the label is uncertain, but their listing according to rank provides a plausible identification. The assembly of ministers who advise the king appears as the three figures seated to Nandivarman's right. Behind them stand three figures representing the superior dependent rulers. Above them stand seven figures representing the members of the two assemblies; one group consists of four on the west and the other of three on the east. The meaning of "assembly" (*gana*) in the context of Nandivarman's court is uncertain, yet the statement made about Nandivarman in his grant of 753–754—"whose might is increasing in consequence of (his) meditations on the feet of the bappa-bhattaraka"—suggests that these two ganas consisted of agamika Brahmins divided between the Pancharatra and the Shaiva Agamas.

There is no reason to think a Bhagavata emperor in Kanchipuram would not have patronized Shaivas. Nandivarman's predecessor Rajasimha (and perhaps his son) had been consecrated a Maheshvara, Nandivarman's general Udayachandra was devoted to Shiva, and Bhagavata theology and liturgy subsume the Shaiva Agama, as we shall see in the following chapters. In the panel, the assembly of Pancharatra Brahmins probably appears as the four men directly above Pallavamalla, because they received his primary patronage. The assembly of Shaiva Brahmins appears as the three men to their right, who received his secondary patronage. Significantly, all seven appear to be singing, and singing one's devotion is a characteristic rite of both Agamas, as the Tamil hymns of the Alvars and Nayanars of this period make abundantly clear.

This leaves the members of the ghatika. The two men pouring the unction fluids over Pallavamalla's hair represent them. A ghatika in southern India of

this period was a center of learning. Kanchipuram's ghatika, crucial to Pallava kingship at least since the fourth century,[20] was widely honored as a center of advanced Vedic knowledge.[21] The Brahmins of the ghatika were responsible for Veda (*vaidika*), and their dharma was to perform the rajasuya for the ruler. Agamika Brahmins also provided an acharya for the newborn Indra, guided the building of his temples, provided priests, fostered his bhakti, and performed rites combining Veda and Agama on behalf of his rule. Perhaps these functional divisions between vaidikas and agamikas represented two distinctly different groups of Brahmins with different dharmas, but the ghatika must have included both and differences between them were not absolute; vaidikas also followed Agama, just as agamikas followed Veda. Moreover, vaidikas presumably could not perform a rajasuya for a ruler belonging to a low-status ritual class unless he had already been purified through Agama consecration. Kanchipuram's ghatika may be understood as a college of Vedagama, which is the term Arumuga Navalar used for his Shaiva schools in the nineteenth century.[22]

The Elephant-head Crown

The ghataka assembly had the authority in Kanchipuram to make a ruler into an Indra of Men. The fifth label of the inscription records this Indra status. When the delegation left Kanchipuram to look for a properly pure heir to the throne, they carried something that to Hiranyavarman looked like a black elephant head. His resident agamika, however, explained that what he thought was an elephant's head were the parts of his son's crown. Some scholars have conjectured that the elephant-like crown signified ancient Pallava connections with the Parthians (Minakshi 1977: 40ff.), but it more likely represented Indra's elephant Airavata. This meaning not only matches the description of the consecrated Pallavan as an Indra of Men but also finds support from Barabudur in Java.

Construction of the Vajrayana Buddhist monument of Barabudur began a few decades after this temple was completed and in a region of Java where Pallavas had long been influential.[23] According to Jan Fontein, Indra (more commonly called Shakra in Buddhist texts) is portrayed in a Barabudur relief in the company of his attendant Airavata, "recognizable by the elephant hood which he wears and his ankusa or elephant hook."[24] The elephant hood includes an elephant's trunk and ears.[25] In the sixth label of our prakara inscription, the attendant (*sevakan*) is described as holding the elephant-head crown containing parts that puzzled Hiranyavarman, which would be the trunk and ears. The attendant holding the crown in Hiranya's court corresponds to the attendent wearing it in the Barabudur scene.

The emissaries from Kanchipuram apparently took with them a person to play the role of Indra's elephant Airavata as they looked for a Pallavan pure

enough to play the role of Indra. This elephant-head crown or hood may have been the complete insignia (*chihnamakhilam*) received by the first Pallava ruler of Kanchipuram in the fourth century when he married into the clan providing Kanchi's Owner (*kacchiyon*). That clan was related to the Cholas of Puhar, and chapter five of the *Chilappatikaram*, which describes the annual new year's festival for the deva Indra, portrays the Chola king in Puhar as an Indra of men. Apparently, the Pallavas of Kanchipuram inherited an ancient royal Indra cult from the Cholas and continued it through Nandivarman Pallavamalla to the last dynastic ruler at the end of the ninth century.

Interestingly, Alexander of Macedon took this ancient royal cult of Indra and Airavata to courts in West Asia when he returned from the Indus River region in 325 BCE.[26] Parthian use of the elephant-head hood or crown appears to be a Western appropriation of this ancient South Asian royal cult very much alive in eighth-century Kanchipuram and found as far east as Java.

The Khatakka or Kataka Clan

The name for Pallavamalla's clan appears three times in the inscription, twice in Tamil script as the "clan of Katava's Ruler" (*katavesha kula*) and once in grantha script as the "Khatakka kings of the agricultural lands" (*khatakka mutarayar [muttaraiyar]*). Hiranyavarman's clan apparently included families ruling in the Kaveri delta in the ancient Chola country and had a keen interest in Pallvamalla's accession to Kanchipuram's throne. They were probably the ones who later gave Nandivarman refuge and military assistance and built Nandi's Town as his subcapital. Perhaps the poet Kalikanri of Mangai was a khatakka mutarayar.

In its grantha letters, *khatava* or *khatakka* corresponds to the Sanskrit *khandava* or *khadava*; the Tamil letters, which omit the aspirate, represent *kha* as *ka*. Khandava in the Krishna story is a forest of sugarplums (*khandava*) east of the Yamuna River ruled by Indra.[27] "Katava's Ruler" (*katava-isha*) or "Khandava's Ruler" (*khandava-isha*) is Indra. Arjuna and Krishna burned down Khandava with Agni's aid to establish the Pandava realm named after Indra as Indraprastha (*BP* 1.15.8). According to this interpretation, the "clan of Katava's Ruler" denotes a clan that provides an Indra to rule a forest that has been transformed into an agricultural realm, like the ancient Chola kingdom of the Kaveri River delta. It implies that the ruling Indra recognized Krishna's sovereignty as a Bhagavata. The "clan of Khatava's ruler" in this inscription thus denotes Bhagavatas claiming the right to provide Kanchipuram's Indra of Men. Clans disputing this right must have created the anarchy that led to the search for a ruler from a pure lineage.

Clan differences explain variations in the stories of the dynasty's origin. Pallavamalla's descendents said that it originated with the first Pallava born to Ashvatthaman and the apsaras Menaka. Skandasishya's line said it originated

with Skandasishya born to Ashvatthaman and a daughter of a naga. Clan differences also explain the concern for purity reported in the inscription. The "purified" (*parishuddha*) status of Pallavamalla's paternal and maternal clans, noted twice as crucial to his authority to assume the throne, appears to mean that both his father and mother came from "Shudras of true being" (*satshudra*) who observed the Bhagavata style of life prescribed by Agama. Ancestors on both sides apparently had received Pancharatra consecrations (*diksha*), which transformed their innately impure nature into a "true being" passed on to their descendents through clan intermarriage. They probably followed the custom of cross-cousin marriage followed in Krishna's own Satvata lineage. Alvar poets recorded their lineages of "true being" in sets of seven generations.[28]

In this inscription, we may conclude, the Khatakka or Katava clan denotes intermarrying families among Bhagavata Pallavas. As muttarayars in the ancient Chola realm, they provided the first Nandivarman to rule Kanchipuram. They retained their social base in the Kaviri River delta, but through Bhima's migration extended their reach into the realm ruled in the eighth century by Hiranyavarman. And they claimed the right for their Ruler of Katavas to be consecrated Kanchipuram's Indra of Men.

Further Pallava divisions are suggested by the inscription's account of Hiranyavarman summoning his four Malla sons: "Hiranyavarma Maharaja sent for all the clan's Wrestlers (*kula-mallar*) in order to ask who would go." This statement implies the existence of clan members who were not Wrestlers or Mallas, probably Hiranyavarman's sons by wives other than his primary queen, who must have been a relative of "true being." Sets of half-brothers sharing the same father but different mothers were common in ancient India, and a source of rivalry and dissension that chapter nine of the *Laws of Manu* attempts to regulate. Intermarriage and clan memory were carefully nourished to sustain family lines, and family lines competing among the Pallavas of Kanchipuram for power explain the anarchy that led to Pallavamalla's accession.

The Location of Hiranyavarman's Court: Cambodia?

The Barabudur elephant-head hood or crown in Java raises the question of the location of Hiranyavarman's court. There is little hard evidence with which to answer it, and what there is may be interpreted to refer to a location in southern India or in Thailand. It is possible, however, that it was in Kambujadesa, known now as Cambodia. I would like to argue for this location by drawing on the research of T. N. Subrahmaniam and T. V. Mahalingam.[29]

This is the argument. Simha began to rule Kanchipuram ca. 535 and had two sons. The elder, Simhavishnu, assumed the imperial throne ca. 560. The younger, Bhima, left Kanchipuram and settled in Kambujadesa to found his own court as a great king (*maharaja*), but not as an emperor (*parameshvara*).

He continued to recognize his elder brother in Kanchipuram as the emperor in whose "shade" he ruled as king, because contact between Kanchipuram and Kambujadesa was well developed. Bhima's descendents through his chief queen belong to the Malla clan of Pallavas, and they ruled with the aid of Pancharatra agamikas imported from Bhagavata centers in India. By 731, the great king in Bhima's court was Hiranya, and he had four Malla sons and a senior agamika named Tarandikonda Bhojar guiding him as his acharya.

The evidence for this argument is slight but significant. Someone named Bhima apparently settled a fortified town north of the great lake in Kambujadesa before 600, because an inscription of Ishanavarman (616–628) found near Phnom Penh records a kingdom and capital known as Bhimapura (Bhima's Fortified Town). It was one of three kingdoms north of the Great Lake subordinate to Ishanavarman (Subramaniam 1967: 91). This timing fits Bhima's exit from Kanchipuram to found his own court. The name Hiranyavarman was common throughout Kambujadesa, and members of the Bhimapura dynasty shared it; this accounts for the name of Pallavamalla's father (Subramaniam 1967: 80–94). Bhimapura must have existed as a dynastic seat for many generations, because the dynasty of Mahidharapura, which ruled Kambujadesa from 1080, appears to have been related to it.

Near the time Bhima left Kanchipuram, royal courts in Kambujadesa were patronizing both the Pancharatra and the Shaiva Agamas. Inscriptions from pre-Angkor Cambodia (635–685) record the presence of the Pancharatra Agama and the Pashupata Agama, whose influence continued (Coedes 1968: 73). An inscription dated 1052 reports that in 802, when Jayavarman II returned to Kambujadesa after a period of exile in Java, he introduced the Vamachara rites of the Shaiva Agama to enable him to establish himself as emperor independent of Java (Dyczkowski 1988: 36). By 877 the Pancharatras, Bhagavatas, and Sattvatas possessed official residences in the new capital of Angkor, along with the Shaivas, Pashupatas, Tapasvins, and Buddhists.[30] Finally, in the twelfth century, Suryavarman II (1112–ca. 1152) constructed his massive Vishnu-house known today as Angkor Wat (Coomaraswamy 1965: 191–195). The Pancharatra Agama may have guided him, because like Nandivarman's Vishnu-house, Ankor Wat faces westward, has three levels, and possesses elaborate depictions of Bhagavata lore. The similarities in mandala and design of these two imperial Vishnu-houses remain to be explored.

This brings us to the interpretation of the inscription's use of the word *gahana*: "Starting from there [at Hiranyavarman's court] he came along the way, leaving behind many mountains, rivers, forests, and gahana." In the *Bhagavata Purana*'s account of Gajendra's prayer to Hari, *gahana* as "depth" describes the dark and deep water of dissolution (*BP* 8.3.5). Mahalingam similarly interprets it to mean watery depths in his translation of the inscription. The location of Bhima's court across the ocean gahana since the end of the sixth century would explain why Hiranya did not did not recognize the

elephant-head insignia held by the attending "Airavata." Tarandikonda Bhojar recognized it, however, because such ritual details were his responsibility as senior agamika, and because his acharya lineage had been refreshed by generations of Pancharatra agamikas from Bhagavata centers in southern India. When they crossed the gahana they brought accurate and updated knowledge of royal liturgies.

The Last Three Labels of the Inscription

The final three labels on the prakara at Kanchipuram are badly damaged, but record Pallavamalla's elevation as Bhagavata emperor and allude to his subsequent struggle with Vikramaditya II. The eleventh label identifies Nandivarman as Perumanatikal. Mahalingam translates this title as "His majesty the king" and notes that it suggests an enhancement of his status after his coronation. Both Minakshi and Mahalingam also understand this inscription to record an invasion of Kanchipuram by Vikramaditya II.

The royal title Perumanatikal derives from the Bhagavata consecration (*diksha*) Nandivarman began at the temple of the Eight-Armed Lord (*ashtabhujasvamin*) at Attiyur outside Kanchipuram's wall and moat, and completed at the temple of the Island's Lord (*ranganatha*) on Sri Rangam island in the Kaveri River. This two-part ceremony occurred years after the unction described in the tenth label and illustrated by its panel. As noted earlier, *perumanatikal* means "Great Being's Venerable Slave" and as an equivalent to "Bhagavan's Supreme Slave" (*paramabhagavata*) denotes the king as the consecrated refugee committed to serving his acharya. Shortly after Nandivarman's diksha, Vikramaditya II again invaded Kanchipuram through his son Kirtivarman, and Nandivarman took refuge in a fort until Kirtivarman left for Vatapi, the Chalukya capital. The eleventh label thus records both Nandivarman's status as the "venerable slave of the Bhagavan" derived from his diksha in 745–746 and his return to Kanchipuram after the army of Vikramaditya II had left.

The designers of the sculpted panels, however, did not depict either his consecration as Great Being's Venerable Slave or his subsequent brief exile. In the case of his consecration, it was a secret rite and would not have been depicted, in contrast to his public unction as an Indra of Men, which they did depict. In the case of his exile, Narada's rhetorical question to Yudhishthira provided the designers with a guide: "Do people know, king, those of your deeds that are done or mostly done, but not those that failed, hero?" (van Buitenen 2: 40; *Mahabharata* 2.5.20ff.). The temple's designers followed Narada's implied instruction and did not depict Nandivarman's failures for his subjects. But his twelve to fourteen years of exile approximate the years Yudhisthira, his brothers, and their wife Draupadi were in exile. Within the esoteric context of the middle-floor sanctum in this Vishnu-house, the designers did record

Nandivarman's exile through the figure of Yudhishthira at his consecration (*rajasuya*) after the Great War. We shall discuss that panel in chapter 9.

Nandivarman Depicted as Bhagavata Emperor Enthroned

Let us now turn to the depiction of Nandivarman Pallavamalla enthroned as Bhagavata emperor or Perumanatikal. No inscribed inscriptions identify these panels, which comprise the bottom register on the southern half of the west wall. Our interpretation will therefore depend on the inscription discussed above, on Kalikanri's poem about the temple found in chapter 3, and on the prashasti poems recording grants he and others made. A sketch from Alexander Rea's *Pallava Architecture* illustrates the sequence, although not always accurately; it omits some details and exaggerates others (Figure 4.4). The movement of animals on the upper and lower registers indicates that the lower sequence is to be read from north to south, from the viewer's right to left.[31]

We shall begin with the large central panel in the lower division, illustrated here by Figure 4.5. The panel consists of six distinct but related elements. Reading from the viewer's right to left, the first element is a female figure who stands at the extreme right, facing forward, her right hand in what appears to be the "fear-not" gesture (*abhayamudra*). To her right is the second element, Nandivarman sitting on a throne, his right leg pendent, with his queen to his right. A royal umbrella emerges from behind his right shoulder. His right hand points toward the south, leading the viewer's eye to the third element.

That third element is enclosed under a large umbrella supported by a central pole, probably the Indra umbrella (*karivai*) referred to in label ten. Its edge is decorated with seven shapes resembling a U or V. Under the umbrella on the north side of the pole (to the viewer's right), and at a level below the queen, sits a man holding a large sword in his right hand. This is Nandivarman's general, Udayachandra, whose sword cut off the head of the rival claimant and won the realm for his king, as recorded in his grant to 108 Brahmins of 752–753 (*SII* 2: 361–374; *IA* 8: 273–284). Under the other side of the umbrella stands a man with his hair knotted at the back gesturing with his



FIGURE 4.4. Nandivarman enthroned as the sovereign of Pallavas. From Rea 1909.



FIGURE 4.5. Nandivarman enthroned with people and ritual objects protecting his rule. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

left hand toward the north. His left arm extends behind a tall slender rod that appears to be fixed upright in a stand with a broken projection at its top. This is probably the khatvanga staff noted in the tenth label. A small male figure sits cross-legged directly below the standing male's right side and to the right of the khatvanga. He sits at a lower level and holds a mudra gesture in his left hand. He may be a Shaiva priest connected to the rites of the khatvanga and to the general, Udayachandra. The ill-defined objects in front of the khatvanga and to the seated male's left may be the conch "with the voice of the sea" of the tenth label, and the drum with the "bitter mouth" added to the conch and khatvanga in stanza nine of Kalikanri's poem.

The gesture of the male standing to the south complements the gesture of the emperor sitting to the north, and these gestures draw the viewer's attention to Udayachandra, seated between them and holding the sword upon which Nandivarman's rule is based. The umbrella thus encloses the three men, the sword, the conch and drum, and the khatvanga within its shade. Rea's sketch misleadingly leaves out the umbrella's pole, includes the queen under its shade, and shortens the sword.

The fourth element of the central panel stands immediately south of the umbrella. It is an elaborate mandapa housing the figure of a seated Brahmin, whose sacred thread is visible (Figure 4.6). He is Nandivarman's acharya. He had consecrated Nandivarman to the status of Great Being's Venerable Slave and, as required of sadhakas, was the object of his devotion, as illustrated by this mandapa (*SS* 21; Smith 1975: 530–531). He was to be regarded as a father and mother greater than the sadaka's biological parents, a point the *Laws of Manu* makes with regard to a Brahmin, but also required of a "purified" Shudra consecrated by Agama. According to Wendy Doniger's translation,



FIGURE 4.6. Acharya enthroned. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

(The teacher [*acharya*]) who fills (the pupil's) two ears with the Veda not in vain is to be known as his mother and his father, and he must not act with malice against him. The teacher [*acharya*] is more important than ten instructors [*upadhyaya*], and the father more than a hundred teachers [*acharya*], but the mother more than a thousand fathers. Between the one who gives him birth and the one who gives

> him the Veda, the one who gives the Veda is the more important father; for a priest's [*brahmana*] birth through the Veda is everlasting, both here on earth and after death. That his mother and father produced him through mutual desire [*kaman*] and he was born in the womb, he should regard as his mere coming into existence. But the birth that the teacher [*acharya*] who has crossed to the far shore of the Veda produces for him through the verse to the sun-god [*savitri*], in accordance with the rules, is real, free from old age and free from death. (*Manu* 2.144–148, Doniger 1991)

Nandivarman's acharya may have been Jyesthapada Somayajin, to whom he gave a village in 753–754 at the request of his grandson serving in the court as the official called the *Brahma-sri-raja* in Sanskrit and the *Brahma-yuva-raja* in Tamil.[32] Jyesthapada Somayajin resided at Puni (now located in Kanchipuram Taluk), belonged to the Bharadvaja gotra, followed the *Chandogya-sutra,* and was described as "poor in faults (*doshadaridra*) but distinguished in appearance (*veshavishishta*)" (*SS* 2: 351, lines 93–96). He would have guided the architect in designing the vimana according to the Pancharatra Agama as indicated by the adjacent model, which is the fifth element (seen to the left in Figure 1.1) The vimana model stands directly north of the sixth element, an elephant walking southward with two riders, one of whom holds an object above his head with his two hands.[33] The elephant leads the viewer to the battle scenes that end the sequence on the wall.

This long central panel depicts Pallavamalla as Nandivarman after his realm had been established through the seven battles that Udayachandra won with his sword, as described in the grant of 752–753. The seven U or V shapes along the edge of the umbrella may represent those battles as repeated symbols of the Pallava bull crest, but usually the Pallava bull was depicted in its full body. More likely they refer to the story in which Krishna conquers seven demonic bulls to win Pinnai as bride, which is the story Kalikanri refers to in the ninth stanza of his poem about the temple. In the *Bhagavata Purana,* Krishna conquers seven demonic bulls to win the princess Satya as bride.[34] Satya, which means "true being," suggests the true being of imperial rule gained when Udayachandra won seven battles as the foundation of his master's empire. Their position on the umbrella indicates Krishna the Unobstructed as the source of these victories: Rites enabled his brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) to pass from the khatvanga placed near the priest in the panel into the sword Udayachandra holds, and with it he had defeated Skandasishya and then the others.

In the Pancharatra Agama, tejas is Shakti in her mode as Victory (Vijayashakti), one of her three forms that Alvar poets refer to frequently and that sculptors depicted in Mamallapuram cave-temples in the seventh century (see Hudson 1982 and 2001). All three of Shakti's forms are present in this en-



FIGURE 4.7. Nandivarman at the impaling of two men. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

thronement scene. Shri or Tirumakal, the Goddess as Majesty, is the first element in the panel, the female figure standing to Nandivarman's left and holding what appears to be the gesture "fear not." Bhumi or Manmakal, the Goddess as Earth or Realm, appears as his queen, Reva, sitting to his right. And the anger of Chandika Durga or Aymakal, the Goddess as Victory, is present in the khatvanga staff next to the umbrella pole; it signifies Goddess Kali, who holds the khatvanga when she emerges from Chandika Durga's forehead.

Let's now consider this scene in its larger context. The panel preceding it on the reader's right depicts two figures impaled, one upside down, in the presence of the king (Figure 4.7). Goddess Sri Lakshmi or Tirumakal stands to his left, and an unknown figure stands to his right gesturing toward the impaled men. This signifies the administration of righteous punishment (*danda*) upon which Nandivarman's rule was said to be based.[35] At the other end, on the reader's left, the elephant moving southward points the viewer toward the four final panels of the wall, three of which depict warfare. The penultimate panel, however, depicts an iconic Krishna standing stiffly in the midst of battle; the dynamism of the figures around him emphasize his stone embodiment (Figure 4.8). This panel probably portrays the standing black icon that once stood in the top sanctum of the vimana but is now missing; for it was that standing Krishna, as Kalikanri states in stanza nine of his poem, who conquered seven bulls to win Pinnai as his wife.



FIGURE 4.8. The Krishna icon in the midst of battle, southwest prakara wall, lower register. Photo by Hudson, 1993.

Kalikanri also refers to this black stone image in stanza two. He calls it the "firm stone (*tin chilai*) that in battle shattered the might of the war bow of the Southern King abounding in chariots." The Tamil words *tin chilai* mean "hard stone image" (*shila*) and "firm bow," and both are intended.[36] Through prayoga rites addressed to Narayana's wheel Sudarshana, as described for example in *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* 29–30, tejas will enter the weapons of the ruler's army.[37] Accordingly, *tin chilai* both as "hard stone image" and as "firm bow" means that Sudarshana's prayoga rites allowed the potency (*shakti*) embodied by Krishna standing as the black stone in the top-floor sanctum to infuse brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) into the emperor's bow. The means for this infusion was the khatvanga raised during the battle, as Kalikanri states: "One day, in the shape of a lion / With nails sharp as diamond, / The Lord fighting the Valorous One / Clawed his waist and tore it open, / And in beautiful Kacci / Encircled by mansions / He has His place, / The Vishnu-house which the Emperor serves, / The Sovereign who rules the Pallavas / In the shade of his White Umbrella / after he raised / the Spear and Banner / of the *khatvanga* / spine of bones / high above the army" (*PT* 2.9.6). These four final panels represent battles Udayachandra won after the seven represented by the seven U or V signs on the umbrella. They account for the

defeat of Bhagavati Kali at Kali's Fort and of the Pandyan's forces at Mannaikudi.

Four conclusions emerge from this analysis of inscription and of sculpted panels. First, as a Bhagavata emperor, Nandivarman Pallavamalla was more than an Indra of Men. His first unction at the age of about twelve had given him that status through a public ceremony recorded for history by a scene sculpted on the prakara of his imperial Vishnu-house. This royal rite made him the legitimate Pallava ruler of Kanchipuram, at least in the eyes of his supporters. But it was the second unction that gave him the status of chakravartin, and this came at the end of a sequence of rites known as the Vibhava-diksha. This unction was a private rather than public sprinkling (*abhisheka*) conducted at the temple of Sri Rangam and not depicted by a sculpted panel, although a damaged inscription refers to it through the title he received. Kalikanri composed two poems to record this consecration for other sadhakas to use in their sadhanas, which we shall bring into our discussion later (*PT* 2.8 and 5.8).

Second, the diksha's first part transformed the Indra of Men into Great Being's Venerable Slave. Emblems burned into his shoulders at the temple of the Eight-Armed Lord in Attiyur denoted his slave status, the wheel on his right shoulder and the conch on his left.[38] The diksha's second part at Sri Rangam gave him rebirth as Narayana's son; and the acharya's "breast milk" then nursed him with the mysteries of the eight-syllable mantra *Om namo narayanaya*. His new status as "son" would have been conveyed by a consecration name of which we have no known record.

Third, since the emperor was now Narayana's property, he was understood to be an extension of Narayana in the same way as his own general Udayachandra was an extension of him. Just as on the battlefield the general represented his emperor in Kanchipuram, so also the emperor in Kanchipuram represented Narayana in Vaikuntha. Just as one could say that Nandivarman had won the battles fought by Udayachandra, so one could say that Vasudeva Krishna ruled the realm when it was Nandivarman sitting on the throne.

Fourth, in the battles that established the emperor's firm control over his realm, Narayana's potency (*shakti*), embodied by the Krishna icon standing in the third-floor sanctum infused the general's sword with brilliant conquering power. This occurred by means of the rites of the khatvanga supervised by the emperor's acharya but implemented by the priest depicted sitting near it. These rites enabled Goddess Kali in Kanchipuram to overcome Bhagavati Kali in Kali's Fort. Vasudeva's Unobstructed formation thus employed tejas on behalf of his imperial slave.

With this introductory background, let us now turn to Parts II and III and the Vishnu-house Nandivarman Pallavamalla built for his Master.

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PART II

The Secret Dimension of the Vishnu-house

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5

The Temple Mandala and the Bottom-floor Sanctum

The Temple Mandala

In concept, the plan of the Emperor's Vishnu-house is a square, its outer boundary marked by a high stone wall. The acharya who guided the royal architect in constructing it followed a mandala. A mandala is a map; it begins with a central point and moves outward toward the four cardinal directions in a sequence of squares and circles. The entire mandala arena of the Vishnu-house is most likely a built form of the *chakrabjamandala* important to Pancharatra ceremonies; it is composed of a wheel (*chakra*) with an eight-petal lotus blossom born of water (*abja*) at its center. The example shown in the frontispiece comes from the *Padma-samhita*. These colors have many specific meanings, but according to the *Padma-samhita*, a specific color is identified with each of the cardinal directions that the sides of this mandala face, and they also correspond to the formations or vyuhas God makes; the square sanctum on the vimana's bottom floor depicts the vyuhas as icons (*archa*).

We may interpret the colors of the mandala as follows. The open lotus blossom denotes God's throne. The color white emanating from it northward is the purity of omniscient knowledge or jnana; it is associated with the Plower (Samkarshana). The color red emanating from it eastward is the impassioned consciousness of sovereignty or aishvarya, and is associated with the Pre-eminently Mighty (Pradyumna). The color black emanating from it southward is potency of shakti. Shakti commonly denotes power, but here it refers to the potency of God's power to create and delude, and is also known as

maya, "delusive creativity." The dark or black is associated with the Unobstructed (Aniruddha). The color yellow emanating from it westward is Hari. This name for God refers to the tawny color of the male lion, which frequents the mountains in the north. The seer or rishi named Dirghatamas describes this tawny lion in the mysterious poem *Rig Veda* 1.54: Vishnu is a ferocious wild beast wandering in the mountains; this beast takes three wide strides, and in his footsteps are the three worlds. But his highest footstep (*padam*) is beyond them, above the pole star called Dhruva, and it shines down on mankind as Vishnu's brilliant padam of refuge. Depictions of Hari as a lion in the shape of a man (Narasimha) and as a man taking strides (Trivikrama) derive from this seer's ancient vision, as do the lengthy stories about them both in the *Bhagavata Purana*.

The tall enclosing prakara wall defines this mandala of five concentric squares, each symbolizing a level or layer (*kosha*) of God's body, whether visible or invisible to us. The outermost layer is this outermost prakara wall, analogous to the skin of our body. The innermost layer is the sanctum hidden inside the towering vimana, analogous to the hidden life (*jiva*) that owns our body. These mandala squares are not immediately apparent to the visitor who has just entered through the prakara gateway. This is because the architect pulled the four central panels on the vimana's western wall away from it, and used them as the face of the porch (*ardhamandapa*) leading into the vimana where God resides. To accommodate this arrangement he likewise extended the western side of the enclosing prakara wall. This altered version of the Vishnu-house mandala is illustrated by the ground plan published by Alexander Rea in 1909, which I have revised (Figure 5.1 [but see note 1 below—ed.]). The main entrance into the vimana is on the porch's western end, directly in line with the western, and only, gateway in the enclosing stone prakara wall. On the opposite end of the west-east axis a smaller doorway opens into the vimana's eastern side. The inside walls of the prakara as well as the outside walls of the vimana, including its porch, are covered with sculpted panels.

The Three Sanctums

Inside the vimana at its center is the sanctum. Technically, it is a *garbhagriha*, which means "house (*griha*) of the embryo (*garbha*)," which is the womb. Inside the womb-sanctum sits the black stone icon of Narayana's formation as Vasudeva. He faces west toward the single doorway. Around the sanctum, but hidden to viewers outside the vimana, runs a path for walking around the sanctum (*pradakshinapatha*) to worship the panels sculpted on the sanctum's exterior sides. They face north, east, and south. A stairway on the south leads from this circumambulatory to the floor above and a stairway on the north leads from that floor to this circumambulatory below.[1]

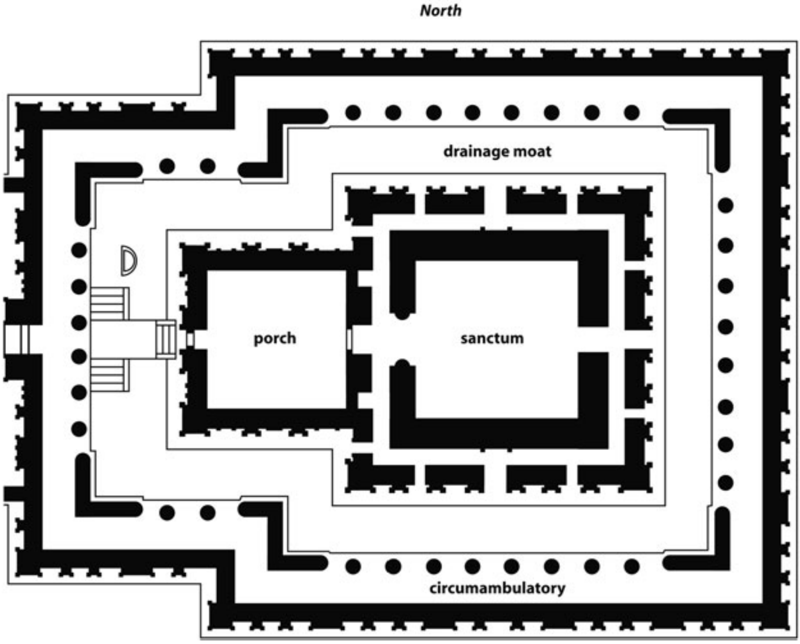


FIGURE 5.1. The ground plan of the Vishnu-house. Revised from Rea 1909.

On the middle floor of the vimana stands a second sanctum with a small porch. It stands directly above the bottom sanctum and repeats its pattern on a smaller scale. The roof of the long porch below forms a verandah in front of the second-floor porch. Its narrow circumambulatory is outside in the open air. The outer walls of the vimana's bottom floor extend above the middle floor far enough to provide a low wall completely encircling the middle floor to encompass the sanctum, its porch, and the verandah. As is also the case on bottom floor, this sanctum and porch are covered with sculpted panels, and a black stone icon is placed inside the sanctum. However, this icon reclines rather than sits (Figure 5.2).

The sanctum on the top floor above, which is in line with the two lower sanctums, is smaller still. It omits the porch and has no verandah. No circumambulatory runs around it and no sculpted panels line its outer sides. Access to it was apparently by ladder. The black stone icon that belongs in that sanctum was standing, but is now missing.[2] The only image now inside is a variation of the bottom floor's seated icon, which is sculpted on the back or east wall.

Finally, an enclosed square space with no opening, visible only in the plan of the vimana (Figures I.2, I.3), caps the vertical sequence of the three sanctums. It never contained an icon and is not accessible. Possibly that hidden cube serves only an architectural function, but I think it more likely that as a hidden fourth above the three sanctums it has a theological meaning.



FIGURE 5.2. Reclining icon in middle-floor sanctum with goddesses Shri and Bhumi. Photo by Hudson, 1989.

If we collapse the three sanctums onto a single plane and place the hidden cube in the center, a mandala emerges (Figure 5.3). In the discussion that follows, I will argue that the meaning of these three sanctums, and the enclosed cube at the top, is the following. The sitting, reclining, and standing icons depict Narayana as Supreme Vasudeva (*paravasudeva*) in three stages of self-transformation. The squared space at the top of the vimana, and the center of the mandala, signifies Supreme Vasudeva as the dimension of God that cannot be seen. This cubed space cannot be reached, it is hidden, and it is empty of a form, characteristics of the mode of consciousness known as "extinction in *brahman*" (*brahmanirvana*), which, according to the *Bhagavata Purana*, is extinction into God. When the devotee thinks entirely of Narayana, the narrator Shuka says, he or she enters "the supreme *brahman*, which is subtle but not empty (*ashunya*), though some think it empty (*shunya*); and that nonempty *brahman* is the Bhagavan Vasudeva" (*BP* 9.9.49). But the nonempty *brahman*, which is Supreme Vasudeva, cannot be visualized with form.

The three sanctums beneath that hidden cube in the vimana, and enclosing it in the mandala, are esoteric depictions of the process by which Supreme Vasudeva transforms himself "internally." Each transformation is more "dense," "manifest," or "gross" than the one that produces it. The densest manifestation is represented by the upper sanctum housing the standing Krishna, and in the mandala by the square immediately enclosing the cube. The least dense manifestation is represented by the lower sanctum housing the sitting icon, and in the mandala by the outside square. The middle sanctum housing the reclining icon mediates between the two extremes, and

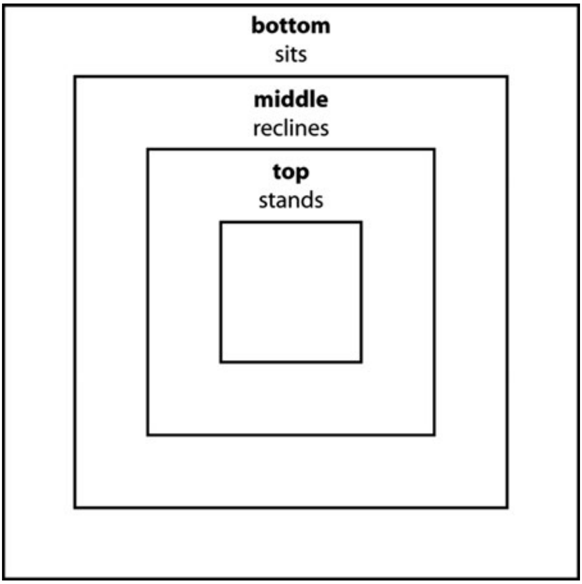


FIGURE 5.3. Mandala of three sanctums on a single plane. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

in the mandala it is represented by the square immediately inside the outermost square. According to this interpretation, the hidden cube at the top represents Supreme Vasudeva as the Self (*atman*) present within Krishna standing inside the densest of God's transformations in the top sanctum.

The Bottom-floor Sanctum: God's Vyuha Formations

The bottom sanctum hidden within the vimana defines this mandala's richly complex set of meanings. It does so by four depictions of Vasudeva. One is the black stone image sitting inside the sanctum; the other three sit as bas-relief sculptures on the three exterior sides of the sanctum's walls. Each of these four depictions represents a specific formation or vyuha, and each faces a specific direction. The Bhagavan makes these four formations within His self, and by this means turns His self into the universe. Figure 5.4 illustrates this concept.

The process of Narayana's bodily transformation follows the concept of the human person described in chapter 2, but inverts it. Whereas the human body has the grossest or densest mode of matter as the outer sheath or person, and the finest mode of matter as the innermost sheath or person, God's body has the grossest mode of matter at its center and the finest mode as its enclosing sheath. This doctrine of God's vyuhas is taught by the *Pancharatra Agama*. As we discussed in chapter 2, the word *vyuha* is here translated as "formation,"

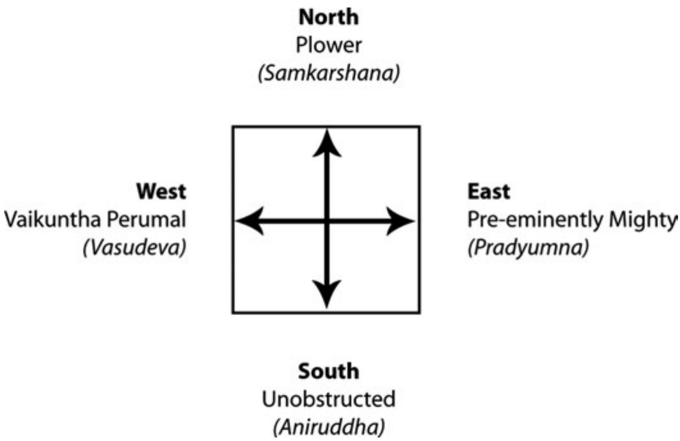


FIGURE 5.4. The four vyuha formations facing their respective directions. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

like the formation of an army. But whereas an army rearranges its component warriors at the order of its strategists, God rearranges His consciousness through the creative power of His unified knowledge known as yogamaya, or simply maya. Nevertheless, just as all of an army's possible formations are fully present in each specific formation it makes, so God's formations are fully present in each specific formation He makes.

According to this Pancharatra doctrine, the formation called Vasudeva is primary; it resembles the entire army assembled on the battlefield, for example the Pandava and Kaurava armies assembled on the Kuru Field on the first day of the Great War. The first formation Vasudeva makes for strategic purposes is called the Plower (Samkarshana); on the mandala the Plower formation faces north. This Plower formation then becomes the formation called the Pre-eminently Mighty (Pradyumna); on the mandala the Pre-eminently Mighty formation faces east. The Pre-eminently Mighty formation then becomes the formation called the Unobstructed (Aniruddha); on the mandala the Unobstructed formation faces south. Vasudeva makes these three formations for strategic purposes. We shall discuss them in detail.

Vasudeva's transformation of his self into a material body begins with the bottom-floor sanctum. The icon sitting here depicts Vasudeva as formation (*vasudeva-vyuha*), the purest mode of Narayana that humans can perceive (Figure 5.5). Vasudeva here corresponds to the *brahma-atman* about which Yajnavalkya teaches King Janaka in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (*BU* 4.4).[3] This *brahman* without a body (*asharira*) is undying life-breath (*prana*) that is nothing but tejas. He is "the breathing behind breathing, the sight behind sight, the hearing behind hearing, the thinking behind thinking." He is the



FIGURE 5.5. Vaikuntha Perumal: The vyuha Vasudeva facing west. From Rea 1909.

atman, who in one's life-breath is perception (*vijnana*) made of maya, and in the space (*akasha*) within one's heart (*hridaya*) is the overlord of all (*sarvasya-adhipati*), the ruler of everything (*sarva-ishvara*) unaffected by good or by bad action (*sadhu-asadhu-karma*). He cannot be grasped (*agrahya*). He is the *brahman* world (*brahma-loka*) of supreme joy (*parama ananda*), "the immense and unborn self (*atman*), the eater of food and the giver of wealth, the unaging, undying, immortal *brahman* free of fear."

The icon inside the sanctum depicts this *brahman-atman* as Ruler, but the three formations on the sanctum enclosing it depict the causal (*karana*) dimension of the subtle body (*sukshmasharira*) the Ruler creates for himself. But "cause" (*karana*) in God's case has nothing to do with karma or necessity, as it does in the case of all other beings. In God's case the cause is his delight in play (*vinoda*, *BP* 10.2.39).

This causal body produces the remainder of God's subtle body (*sukshma-sharira*), which the sanctum above and its reclining icon represent. That

sanctum in turn produces God's gross body (*sthulasharira*), which is represented by the sanctum above it with its now-missing standing icon. It, of course, is the universe in which we exist. Finally, the enclosed cube hidden above that top sanctum represents the Supreme Vasudeva who pervades all his bodies or sheaths but cannot be seen. Nevertheless, Parama Vasudeva uses his own creative power (*atmamaya*) to become the man Krishna living in his own gross body of spacetime (*BP* 9.24.57).

Viewed from the outside, the vimana intentionally looks like a mountain, and one does indeed walk up it as if walking up a mountain. Yet, viewed from inside, that upward journey is also inward: as the viewer climbs to the top of the Vishnu-house he or she walks inward toward its center.

According to this secret or esoteric perspective, the bottom sanctum is understood to enclose the middle sanctum, the middle sanctum to enclose the top sanctum, and the top sanctum to enclose the hidden cube. When these four levels are conceptually collapsed onto the same plane, they form the esoteric mandala illustrated above. In thus mapping, one walks from the bottom sanctum inward to the middle sanctum, from there inward to the top sanctum, and there one gazes on the empty cube at the center. In the terms of God's body, one begins at the outer edge of the mandala with the causal dimension. One moves inward to the rest of the subtle dimension, and from there to the dimension of the gross body, and there one finds God's essential Self (*atman*), the point from which the entire mandala emerges.

Significantly, when we view this mandala in terms of the three icons and the hidden cube, the sitting icon encloses the reclining icon, the reclining icon encloses the standing icon, and it encloses the empty cube. The standing icon is Krishna as lover and hero; the cube at its center illustrates the Bhagavata teaching that, unlike other avatars, Krishna is Narayana's complete embodiment. As the Bhagavata poet Goda (Antal) says in the first stanza of her Tamil poem *Tiruppavai*:

> The son of Nanda the cowherd,
>   whose spear is sharp
>   and deeds ruthless,
> The young lion of Yashoda,
>   whose eyes are full
>   of beauty,
> He whose body is dark as a cloud,
>   with red eyes
>   and a face like
>   the sun and moon,
> Is Narayana himself. . . .[4]

The cube at the center thus represents Narayana's essential Self within the standing Krishna to illustrate a fundamental Bhagavata doctrine: Narayana

uses his maya to create Krishna as a unique human being who embodies on earth his six glorious excellences (*bhaga*) in their fullness.

The Vasudeva Formation Enthroned in the Bottom-Floor Sanctum

Kalikanri begins his poem about the Emperor's Vishnu-house by describing the enthroned icon in the bottom sanctum as the source of the causal body: "The Speaker is the substance / Of the words He speaks, / Is Taste, Touch, Speech, Smell, and Sight, / Is auspicious Hara, / Is Naranan, / Is Brahma with four faces / And Kacci, beautiful in the rich expanse / Of her realm, is His place, // There where its many subjects shout / "The Ruler of Pallavas!" / "The Ruler of Cheras!" / And numerous kings prostrate / To the victory anklet of this / Pallava Lord of noble Mallas / Who built the Emperor's Vishnu-house / To be His home" (*PT* 2.9.1).

In the stanza's first half, Kalikanri describes the Vasudeva formation as we find him today, a large black stone king facing west with eyes wide open. His left leg is pendent and his right leg is drawn up onto the throne, its foot resting on his left thigh in a relaxed posture (*lalitasana*) (Saunders 1985: 127). His back right hand holds the wheel (*chakra*), and his back left the conch (*shankha*). The front right hand holds the mudra gesture of "fear not" (*abhaya*), and the front left hand the mudra gesture of "giving boons" (*varada*). For daily worship, the icon is dressed, crowned, and garlanded. The photograph in Figure 5.6 shows gold plates covering portions of Vaikuntha Perumal's black stone body. His cloth *veshti* or dhoti hides His lalitasana posture. Shakti in her two forms as Goddess Shri and Goddess Bhumi is not present as separate stone icons. For liturgical services, smaller moveable icons of the Bhagavan with the separate goddesses are placed in front on an altar so they articulate the dimensions implied by the black icon sitting alone. This large black icon fills the sanctum; room is left only for the small moveable metal icons in front, and for the priest serving during worship.

This icon embodies the Vasudeva formation, whose six glorious excellences are contained in a body we perceive as black. They emerge into action when their possessor makes the three strategic formations that appear as sculpted panels on the outside surface of the sanctum's north-facing, east-facing, and south-facing sides, each enthroned in a similar manner. In clockwise sequence, they are entitled "Plower" (Samkarsana), "Pre-eminently Mighty" (Pradyumna), and "Unobstructed" (Aniruddha).

The sanctum defines an outside and an inside, which inevitably obscure the doctrine it illustrates. The formations we see facing outward toward the cardinal directions on its surface theologically take place "inside" Shakti, whom the sanctum itself embodies as causal matter. The bottom-floor sanctum



FIGURE 5.6. The vyuha Vasudeva facing west. From Ramesh 1993.

denotes Narayana's darkened "center" where directional space has not yet appeared. Vasudeva's self-transformation into a complete subtle body, and then into the body of directional space and chronological time takes place "inside" this darkened "center." Our ever-moving universe (*jagad*) thus exists within the boundaries of God's invisible body, just as the wind exists within the invisible boundaries of space (*akasha*). As Krishna explains to Arjuna: "All this moving universe is pervaded by me with an unmanifest form: all beings stand in me, and I do not stand in them. [Yet] beings do not stand in me, behold my unified sovereign consciousness (*yoga aishvara*): supporting beings and [yet] not standing in beings, my Self is the origin of beings. Just as the great wind stands in space and [yet] moves always and everywhere, so all beings stand in me; thus you should understand it" (*BG* 9.4–6).

In order to illustrate this transformation "inside" God, the sanctum depicts it as a center extending outward in the cardinal directions. The result is an image of God with four faces, each turned toward a cardinal direction. Krishna also explains this to Arjuna:

> I will tell you that which should be known: once a man knows it, he attains to immortality. The highest *brahman* (*parambrahma)* It is called—beginningless—It is not being nor is It not-being. Hands and feet It has on every side, on every side eyes, heads, mouths, and ears; in the world all things encompassing [changeless] It abides. Devoid of all the senses, It yet sheds light on all their qualities, [from all] detached, and yet supporting all; free from Nature's constituents, It yet experiences them. Within all beings, yet without them; unmoved, It yet moves indeed; so subtle is It you cannot comprehend It; far off It stands, and yet how near It is! Light of lights, "Beyond the Darkness" It is called: [true] knowledge, what should be known, accessible to knowledge, established in the heart of all. (*BG* 13.12–17)

The dimension of God Krishna calls supreme *brahman* (*parambrahma*) is Vasudeva. The dimension we shall later meet as great *brahman* (*mahadbrahma*) is Shakti, the Goddess (*BG* 14.3). Supreme *brahman* resides at the center of our own consciousness as the Self (*atman*). Great *brahman*, the Goddess, resides with us as our material bodies, enveloping and hiding the Self. Moreover, supreme *brahman* sits as the black stone icon in great *brahman* as the sanctum and the vimana as his material bodies. Macrocosm and microcosm thus converge in a single Vishnu-house, which functions, in Robert I. Levy's terms, as a "mesocosm."[5]

The Circumambulatory

Vasudeva's sequence of internal formations unfolds clockwise from the right side (*pradakshina*) of the seated stone icon. Each formation is sculpted as

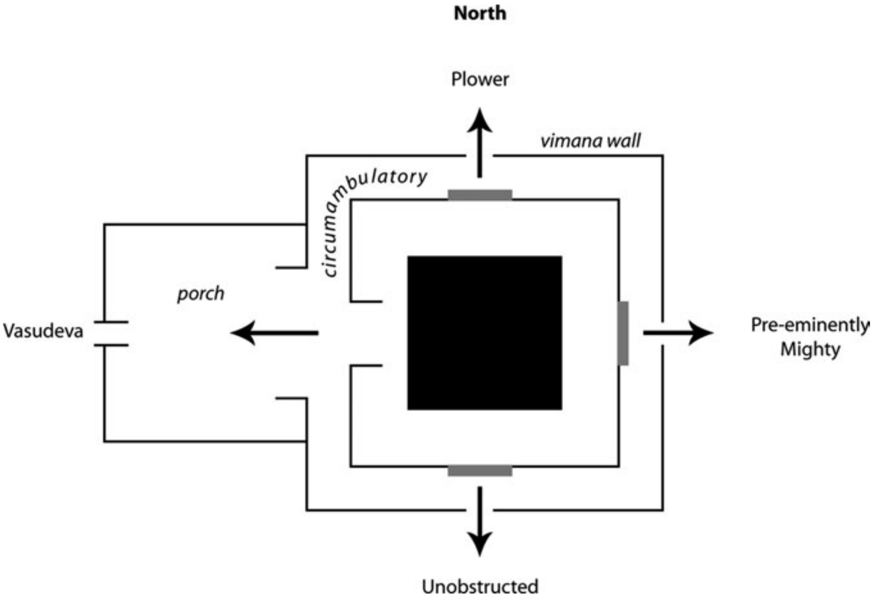


FIGURE 5.7. Diagram of the bottom-floor sanctum and porch. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

enthroned, with deva Brahma to his right and deva Shiva to his left; their smaller size and subordinate place denote their dependence on the Bhagavan in the middle. These vyuha panels are not under worship today and are badly damaged, but continue to reveal the sequence in which Vasudeva's Light blazes forth to emanate spacetime. Counterclockwise (*prasavya*) they reveal the sequence Vasudeva follows to resorb spacetime into the primordial unity of his hidden consciousness.[6] In either direction, the sequence ends at the complete Vasudeva formation seated inside the sanctum facing west. Figure 5.7 illustrates the following discussion.

A doorway at Vasudeva's right opens into the completely enclosed cirumambulatory.[7] Walking clockwise, the wall to the viewers' right is the outer surface of the sanctum, the wall to the left is the inside of the enclosing vimana wall. Today there are no other images and no paintings in the passageway. Two narrow windows in the vimana wall provide daylight for viewers on each of the sanctum's sides. A larger opening in the vimana wall directly opposite each vyuha depiction allows the figure to gaze outward into the world, shining forth like flame inside a lantern.

The Plower Formation Facing North

The badly damaged sculpture portrays the white Plower, pleasantly inebriated, sitting in a royal pose of sensual ease on a flat throne, as shown in the 1909

drawing (Figure 5.8). His left leg is pendent and his right leg rests on the throne. Five cobras with expanded hoods rise behind his head and crown. Standing on a level below the throne is Brahma with multiple heads to his right and Shiva to his left. Other unidentified figures appear to be seated below his feet.

This north-facing Plower formation represents the first pair of Vasudeva's glorious excellences (*bhaga*): omniscient knowledge (*jnana*) and its indefatigable transformative power (*bala*) (Gupta 1989: 224–228). Samkarshana the Snake is portrayed here as the self-deluded omniscience on which everything is based. He is called Endless (*ananta*). He begins the sequence of formations as "First to Escape," and after everything dissolves he is the "Primordial Remainder." His title Adishesha captures both meanings. Krishna explains this to Arjuna: "All beings, O [Arjuna] son of Kunti, pour into the [feminine] matter (*prakriti*) that belongs to me at the end of a great cycle (*kalpa*), and again I emit them at the beginning of a great cycle. Grasping my own matter, I emit again and again this whole unsubmissive collection of beings through the will of matter" (*BG* 9.7–8).

Samkarsana means "drawing together," "contracting," "attracting," and "plowing." It connotes an attractive and powerful plowman with sexual meaning: The plowman is the "knower of the field" and is male, while the "field" he knows and plows is female. As Krishna tells Arjuna, this plowman knows how to plow the field fruitfully: "And know me as the field-knower in all fields, [Arjuna] son of Bharata; whatever knowledge there is of the field and the field-knower that knowledge is my doctrine. . . . (*BG* 13.2). My womb is great *brahman* (*mahadbrahma*), I plant the embryo in it; the arising of all existing things comes from that, [Arjuna] son of Bharata. In all wombs, [Arjuna] son of Kunti, whatever forms arise, *brahman* is their transcendent womb, I am the father who plants the seed" (*BG* 14.3–4).

This endless process, however, depends upon misperception (*avidya*); God has to see double, as it were. Using the royal court as a metaphor, the Queen offers the King liquor, which clouds his mind, loosens his self-control, and allows her to arouse him and to seduce him. The universe of differing entities thus comes into being, one might say, when a dimension within the One gets inebriated enough to see double, couples with itself, and becomes pregnant. But this is the union of consciousness with the primordial substratum of matter (*pradhana*) and has the nature of a dream, or of an imagined scene, or of a thought. The fetus produced exists only so long as the dreamer's imagination or thought continues (*BP* 11.13.30–34). In other words, our universe conceived within God exists only as long as God thinks it.

When Krishna and his kinsmen depict Vasudeva's formations in the Krishna Story (*Krishnakatha*) found mostly in book ten of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the Vasudeva formation appears as Krishna, and the Plower appears as his elder brother. He is named Balarama, "the pleasing (*rama*) power of



FIGURE 5.8. Samkarshana, the Plower formation, facing north. From Rea 1909.

omniscience (*bala*)," and also Baladeva, "God as the power of omniscience." His white skin denotes jnana's purity (*sattva*). In early Bhagavata sculpture, Balarama is often hooded by snake heads, carries a plow (*hala*), and holds a cup of the liquor he enjoys (D. M. Srinivasan 1989). The snake signifies omniscience (*jnana*) as the one who knows the field; the liquor signifies this knower's voluntary self-delusion; and the plow signifies his planting the embryo in the field.

The plow is also Balarama's weapon. He uses it to snag demons, to divert the Yamuna River, and to pull the Kuru capital of Hastinapura into the Ganga River (*BP* 10.65; 68; 78.17–40; 79). In order to pound opponents into submission, he also uses a pestle or club (*musala*). By pre-Gupta times, Samkarshana Balarama was a model for some type of ascetic practice. According to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* of about the fourth to second centuries BCE, his ascetic worshipers had shaved heads or braided hair, and were well enough known that spies would use their guise as a disguise (Chakraborti 1973: 167; Rangarajan 1992: 20).

The Pre-eminently Mighty Formation Facing East

From the Plower viewers walk to the end of the passageway, turn right past the exit of the stairway leading from the floor above, and encounter the Pre-eminently Mighty formation. He sits in the middle of the sanctum wall facing east. The only significant difference in position between this vyuha sculpture and the other two is that it faces toward a door rather than a window. The door is the east entrance into the vimana allowing access to the stairs leading to the floor above.

As befits the bhaga of sovereignty, the Pre-eminently Mighty has a more formal royal posture than the inebriated Plower. He sits on a flat throne and his pendent left leg rests on a footstool (Figure 5.9). Two broken hands appear to have held mudra gestures, and the back pair of arms holds the wheel and conch. Brahma stands to his right, holding the anjali posture, as does Shiva standing to his left. Three unidentified smaller figures stand in between.

The Pre-eminently Mighty manifests the Bhagavan's second pair of glorious excellences: sovereignty (*aishvarya*) and the heroic ability to be unaffected by any change he brings about (*virya*). He is Vasudeva's passion (*rajas*) that motivates and entangles all beings, yet does not entangle him. In the *Bhagavadgita*, Krishna tells Arjuna that the primeval Person from whom all generative action flows (*BG* 15.4) is the source of passion that gives rise to desire and anger (*BG* 3.37)—to the form of desire difficult to conquer (*BG* 3.43)—but is untouched by the impulse (*BG* 7.11–14). According to the metaphor of the royal court, the King sits indifferently among his works, looking on and supervising the actions of the Queen. Yet the King and Queen mysteriously occupy the same body. Krishna reveals this "royal secret" to Arjuna when he describes

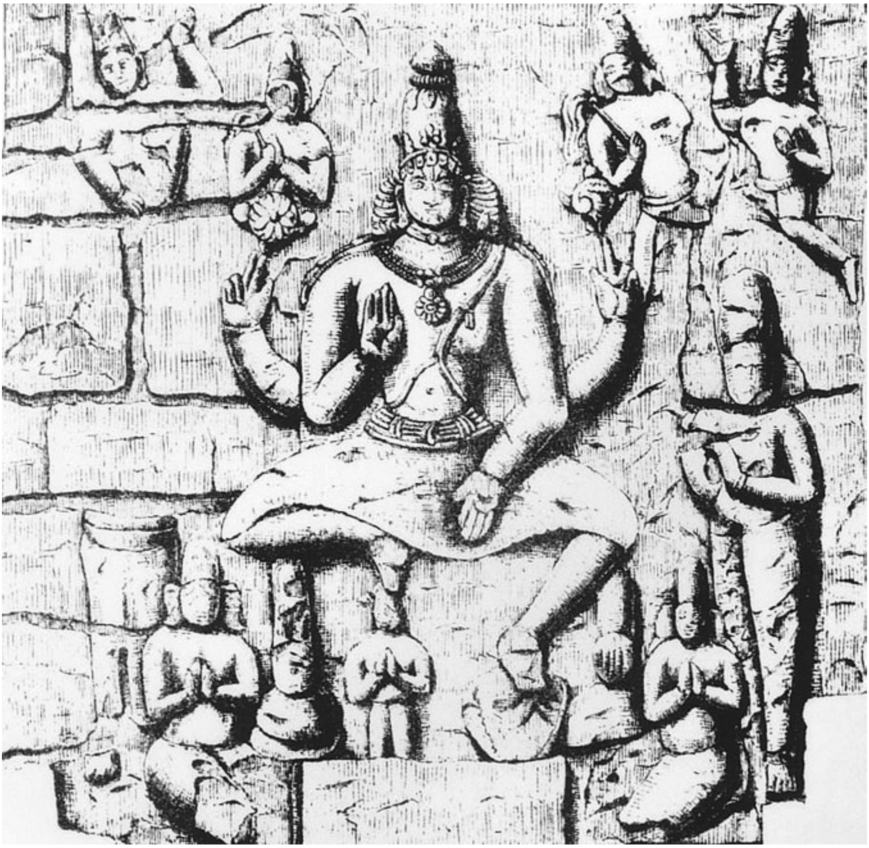


FIGURE 5.9. Pradyumna, the Pre-eminently Mighty formation, facing east. From Rea 1909.

himself sitting enthroned while he brings forth all the worlds inside his material womb: "And these acts of mine do not bind me, O Prize Winner, as one indifferent I sit among these acts unentangled. While I watch and preside, matter sets in motion [things] moveable and immoveable; by this means, O [Arjuna] son of Kunti, the moving universe revolves" (*BG* 9:9–10).

The sculpture portrays the Pre-eminently Mighty as obviously pregnant, with broad hips and a prominent abdomen [which do not appear in Rea's drawing—ed.]. The pregnant male is an ancient theme in Indian sculpture (D. M. Srinivasan 1994), and expresses the meaning of this formation. The Pre-eminently Mighty's pregnancy here derives from the Plower's coupling on the side facing north. The embryo planted there exists here at God's uterine center as the universe of spacetime, which the Pre-eminently Mighty impels as he watches with an unblinking gaze. In another context, Krishna uses the planting of the seed of an asvattha tree to describe this idea. He tells Arjuna

about the "field knower" and the "field" (*BG* 13.1–13), then tells him that he is the one who plants the seed in the field or womb (*BG* 14.1–4), and then describes the "Tree of Life" that grows from it (*BG* 15.1–3, see also *BP* 10.2.27).

The Pre-eminently Mighty faces outward toward the east, the direction of heaven where devas dwell under Indra's rule. But we should remember that doctrinally he faces inward, for heaven exists at his own "center," and his passion appears there as Kandarpa, or more familiarly as Kamadeva, "Desire as Deva" (*BG* 10.28). Frustrated desire becomes the deva Skanda (Spurting). In one telling of Skanda's story Agni spurts his semen into the Vedic fire, and in another telling the semen is Shiva's; in both Skanda become the master of deva warlords (*senapati*) (*BG* 10.24).

In the Krishnakatha, both Kama and Skanda take birth as Krishna's sons by different mothers. Rukmini gives birth to his son named Pradyumna, and Jambavati gives birth to his son named Samba (a weapon).[8] The story's kinship terms thus translate desire and anger into half-brothers. Pradyumna looks exactly like his father and stirs erotic pleasure in his father's many wives merely through his appearance (*BP* 10.55.40). Samba is a powerful fighter whose anger brings about the extinction of Krishna's Yadava clan and begins the Kali Yuga (Hudson 1996: 80–83). Moreover, Samba does this in a story that echoes the idea of the pregnant male illustrated by this vyuha sculpture: he provokes a curse while dressed as a pregnant woman.

His half-brother Pradyumna also continues the theme. He plays the role of a woman in a story that does not appear in the *Bhagavata Purana*, but rather in two Tamil stories of the fifth and sixth centuries, the *Chilappatikaram* by Ilankovatikal and the *Manimekalai* by Chattanar.[9] According to the *Chilappatikaram*, during the Indra festival in the Chola port of Puhar, eleven dances are performed. One of them is the petu dance performed by Kama (Pradyumna) in the guise of a woman.[10] A fuller description of this petu dance appears in the *Manimekalai*, where a street dancer in Puhar enacts it to end a story the *Bhagavata Purana* does tell (*Manimekalai* 3: 116–125). According to this story (*BP* 10.62–63), Pradyumna's son named Aniruddha looks very much like his paternal grandfather, Krishna. Usha, the daughter of the asura Bana, has seen him only in a dream, but has him brought secretly to Sonapura, where he slips past Shiva, who guards Bana's palace, and enters her apartments to become her lover. Usha's father Bana is the eldest son of the asura king Bali, who rules in the underworld realm of Sutala, where the Bhagavan as Dwarf guards his palace. Bana is Shiva's devotee and has a thousand arms; he uses them to drum when Shiva performs his dynamic tandava dances. This pleases Shiva, so he stands guard at Bana's capital of Sonapura.

When Usha becomes pregnant their affair is revealed. Her outraged father puts Aniruddha in prison. Pradyumna and Krishna come to the rescue and besiege Sonapura. Krishna fights Shiva and chops off all but four of Bana's thousand arms, but he agrees to Shiva's submissive request to spare his

devotee's life. This is where the *Bhagavata Purana*'s telling of the story ends. But the Tamil telling continues the story. It says that Pradyumna dances a victory dance (*puranataka*) at Bana's capital as a man with the predominant characteristics of a woman (*peti*). We may imagine that Pradyumna has Shiva in mind while he dances victoriously as a woman, for when Pradyumna was Kamadeva in heaven, Shiva burned him up. Now, however, he has mastered Shiva.

Praydumna's dance must remind Shiva of the dance he performed after he had destroyed the Three Cities (*tripura*). He first smeared himself with white ashes (*pantaranka*) and then assumed the guise of a fierce form of the Goddess known as Bhairavi (Zvelebil 1985: 45). But here at Sonapura, where passion has fulfilled itself in Usha's pregnancy, the defeated Shiva watches Pradyumna dance in a woman's guise to proclaim his supremacy over the Destroyer of Three Cities (*tripurantaka*). Pradyumna's dance thus proclaims his sovereignty over passion, and over the burning knowledge by which Shiva turns desire to ashes.

These two victory dances are statements of Bhagavata theology. Each replicates Narayana as the Ancient Couple, as the primordial Supreme Person with the primordial supreme Goddess. The metaphor guiding this theology is a king with his primary queen. The Supreme Person is the king; the Goddess is his queen. The queen is the king's shri or majesty; it is she that makes him king. Majesty is the source of the king's realm and of the subjects in it; and she is the source of the conquering power that protects it.

When Bhagavata theology thinks of God in these terms, it speaks in Tamil of Tirumal, of "Great Being (*mal*) with Majesty (*tiru*)" or "Majesty (*tiru*) with Vishnu (*mal*)." In Sanskrit it speaks of Shridhara, "the Bearer (*dhara*) of Majesty (*shri*)," and of Shrinivasan, "the Abode (*nivasa*) of Majesty." According to this theology, Goddess Shri produces the universe as the king's realm by becoming Goddess Bhumi. Whenever the universe or realm needs protection, Goddess Shri becomes Goddess Chandika Durga. She does this through the shakti or potency that God embodies in the form of Madhusudana, "Destroyer of Deluded Passion." When Madhusudana's shakti or potency is "awakened," it produces tejas in the mode of Goddess Chandika Durga. Goddess Chandika Durga thus embodies God's brilliant conquering power; and in its "angry" or most intense form, this tejas emerges from her forehead as Goddess Kali.

Let us now return to the dances and apply this theology. When Pradyumna and Shiva dance in the guise of women, they may be understood as imitating the male Madhusudana as shakti or potency. Their female guise imitates the tejas or brilliant conquering power, which makes them successful warriors. As these males dance, they replicate the primordial Ancient Couple in its mode as Madhusudana, the Destroyer of Deluded Passion, which combines male potency (*shakti*) with female conquering power (*tejas*).

This brings us to the third and final formation. Moving southward, viewers turn right into the south-side passageway and to the Unobstructed formation.

The Unobstructed Formation Facing South

The Unobstructed panel is badly damaged on the bottom, but closely resembles the royal pose of the Pre-eminently Mighty, without the broad hips and pregnant abdomen (Figure 5.10). Two figures on either side may depict Hanuman, the monkey devotee of Rama, and Garuda, the kite bird serving Vasudeva as vehicle (*vahana*). Shiva at his left is ruined, but Brahma's three visible heads are intact at his right.

The Unobstructed manifests Vasudeva's third pair of glorious excellences: potency (*shakti*) and brilliant conquering power that is sufficient in itself (*tejas*). Mantras embody this potency. When mantras are employed properly, they effect a brilliant conquering power that overcomes all obstacles to the possession of prosperous longevity depicted as a drink called amrita or "non-death." Ideally, the long and prosperous life amrita bestows will lead one toward emancipation from life altogether.

Krishna tells Arjuna that the triple gate of purgatory is desire (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), and greed (*lobha*). This gate, he say, must be left behind if anyone is to move to the highest goal (*BG* 16.21–22). Desire, anger, and greed characterize the night-stalking demons (*rakshasa*) who attack humans from the south, for example Ravana in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. The path of rites that lead out of that triple gate, Krishna also says, is found in the system (*shastra*) which teaches that he is the supreme Vasudeva and whose instructions (*vidhi*) guide ritual actions (*karma*) (*BG* 16.23–24). The system is the Pancharatra Agama's teaching about rites performed for practical goals called prayoga. Prayoga rites are the means by which Krishna's devotee keeps possession of amrita.

But not everyone believes that Krishna is the supreme Vasudeva, and these nonbelievers, Krishna says, belong to the shadowy and delusive side that faces south toward demons and death: "Not knowing me in the human form that I have assumed, stupid people disregard my supreme existence as the great Ruler of Beings. Of useless hope, of useless acts, of useless knowledge, without discrimination, they cling to rakshasa and asura matter, who is the Deluding Female (Mohini). But people great in their self, Son of Pritha, seek refuge in deva matter, adoring [me] with a mind focused nowhere else, knowing the imperishable origin of all beings" (*BG* 9.11–13).

As if to illustrate this passage, Mohini the Deluding Female appears at the southwest corner of the vimana wall enclosing this side of the sanctum (see below, Figure 15.2). Placed at the location of disintegration (*nirriti*) and sunset, the courtesan faces south while she feeds amrita to devas as asuras watch. Mohini is the female guise that the Unobstructed as Pervading Actor (*vishnu*) assumes to manipulate asura lust on behalf of devas. Mohini is the Unobstructed's version of Pradyumna's and Shiva's guises as dancing women. She embodies the potency (*shakti*) of prayoga rites to feed amrita's prosperous longevity to people purified of desire, anger, and greed. The purification



FIGURE 5.10. Aniruddha, the Unobstructed formation, facing south. From Rea 1909.

process is the subject of the "Path of the Southern Doctrine" illustrated on the sanctum above by its south-facing panels. We shall discuss it in chapter 10.

Given the meanings of the all-inclusive Vasudeva formation, and of the three formations within him, it is likely that the body of each of those three had originally been painted with the color that signifies one of the three threads of matter from which everything is woven. The Plower would have been white (*shukla*) to signify the lucid sattva thread that dominates omniscience when it is embodied. The Pre-eminently Mighty would have been red (*rakta*) to signify the rajas thread that dominates on behalf of passion. The Unobstructed would have been dark blue (*shyama*) to signify the tamas thread that obscures the others to produce ignorance.

The colors of Vasudeva's various bodies have nothing to do with his innate color, of course. He is best thought of as Light. A shramana son of Rishabha, one of Vasudeva's avatars whom we shall meet later, explains that the color of Vasudeva's body is determined by the degree of passion in the consciousness of those who perceive him (*BP* 11.5.20–34). They see him as fair in the Krita Yuga and worship him with ascetic self-control (*tapas*) and discipline of the mind (*sama*) and body (*dama*). They see him as red in the Treta Yuga and worship him with the fire sacrifices of the three Vedas. They see him as dark blue in the Dvapara Yuga and worship him with rites of Veda together with Tantra, and use the Pancharatra mantra, "Veneration to You, Vasudeva, veneration to Samkarshana, and veneration to the Bhagavans Pradyumna and Aniruddha." Finally, in the Kali Yuga they see him as black (*krishna*), like an alluring sapphire, and they worship him with various rites of Tantra centered on singing and chanting in sankirtana.

All four of these types of worship have been employed for millennia in the Kali Yuga, which means that this teaching encodes a complex view of time. Just as Vasudeva is present in all his formations, and just as each formation is hidden in the others, so each age or yuga is present in a hidden manner in all the ages. Even in this age dominated by the deluding Kali, the Krita Yuga's purity is present and in some cases may be recovered. Most devotees in this Kali Yuga follow rites of Tantra or Agama, which include singing bhajans, reciting the Bhagavan's thousand names, and listening to the stories of Krishna, Rama, and others. But there are some who practice tapas, sama, and dama, there are others who maintain the rites of the fire sacrifice, and there are others still who practice the mixture of Veda and Tantra taught by Agama. In this manner, Krita's purity, Treta's passion, and Dvapara's darkness are present within Kali's overwhelming blackness. As a result, God is perceived differently, and widely varied accounts of God are reported over time, but they all may be true.

Viewers leave the Unobstructed walking westward. They turn north and exit to their starting place at the doorway leading to the seated Vasudeva. He, of course, contains all three formations, and all three pairs of bhagas within

himself, their white, red, and dark blue bodies concealed by his stunning blackness. Kalikanri says in the second stanza of his poem that the universe produced by the sequence of formations we have just examined exists inside this sitting Vasudeva in an open lotus blossom at the region of his navel. He is therefore is known as Padmanabha, "he has a lotus (*padma*) at his navel (*nabha*)": "The vast Sky forever black, / The Lights of Sun and Moon, / The Earth and her Mountains / All continue at the navel / Of Kannan with the Lotus Eyes, / Whose place is splendid Kacci / With her tall surrounding walls, // Where the Owner of the / Hard Stone and strong Bow / that scorched the valor / of the Southern King / steady in chariots / during a battle / on enemy ground / Continues as Pallava Sovereign / Here on earth where he built / The Emperor's Vishnu-house" (*PT* 2.9.2).

In order to see the realm where the lotus blossoms, viewers walk up the stairs to the middle-floor sanctum. They climb upward, but from the esoteric point of view they walk inward. Following the analogy of the human person discussed in chapter 2, they move from the "causal" dimension of God's body represented by the bottom sanctum into the remaining dimensions of his "subtle body" represented by the middle sanctum. These two sanctums, we might say, represent God's soul (*jiva*).

But before we turn to the middle-floor sanctum, let us return to the mandala and to the meanings these four vyuha formations give it. Their fundamentals appear in the ancient Vedic fire sacrifice, yajna, but Bhagavata Dharma builds a richly detailed edifice on this foundation. We shall begin examining the mandala as a map of directional space, and then as a map of chronological time.

The Mandala's Two Axes of Directional Space

Bhagavata Dharma teaches that space, or akasha, can be with directions and without directions. Non-directional space is the matrix for the perpetually moving universe of directional space. The two intersecting axes of the mandala define its four cardinal directions: one axis runs from west to east and the other from north to south. A deva at each cardinal direction presides over a specific set of occupants. On the north-south axis, Soma the Moon presides in the north over human life in Bharata on Earth; and Yama in the south presides over the dead in Purgatory (Naraka). On the east-west axis, Indra presides in the east over devas in bright Heaven above Earth; and Varuna presides in the west over asuras and nagas in the dark waters beneath Earth called Rasa (liquid, sap, juice, suggesting the liquor asuras enjoy). Figure 5.11 illustrates this mandala map of the north-south and west-east axes of directional space. We shall follow custom and discuss these directions clockwise, beginning with human life in the north.

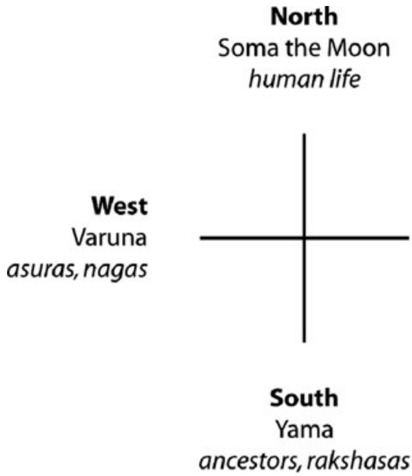


FIGURE 5.11. The two axes: Four cardinal directions and their presiding devas and occupants. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

NORTH. The Plower formation faces north toward Bharata, the realm of human life, one of the nine regions (*varsha*) of the Jambu continent at the center of Goddess Earth, Bhumidevi. Mount Meru stands at Jambu's center with Bharata to the south. The Himalayas form Bharata's northern boundary, and the sea of salt water forms the boundaries of its other three sides. With rare exceptions, human life is confined to Bharata. Soma the Moon (also known as Chandra) presides there. According to an ancient Vedic story, the devas placed a portion of Soma and its Vedic sacrifice on the moon in case asuras should again take over Earth and steal Veda from them, which would be a disaster for them and for us. This is why the moon is known as Soma. In case this happens, devas will go to the moon and use its reserved soma sacrifice to defeat the asuras and push them back under Earth. Moreover, this portion of the soma sacrifice "sprang" like a hare from Bharata to the moon, where it now appears to us as the shape of a hare when the moon is full. This is why Soma the Moon is also known as Shasin, "He Who Possesses the Hare."

EAST. The Pre-eminently Mighty formation faces the bright deva realm of Heaven (*svarga*) above Earth. Heaven is one of the three worlds of death and birth, and its residents freely interact with the inhabitants of the other two worlds, Earth and the Rasa waters beneath her. Heaven's upper limit is the pole star called Dhruva, and the upper portion of Mount Meru defines its lower limit. Indra presides in Heaven as the king of devas, but Heaven can also be the residence of asuras when they emerge from Rasa and conquer Indra, as they frequently do. When true order (*dharma*) exists, however, devas reside in Heaven, asuras reside in Rasa, and humans reside between them on Bharata.

On the mandala map, Bharata in the north and Heaven in the east meet at the northeast corner. Diagonally opposite to this auspicious corner of sunrise is the inauspicious corner of sunset at the southwest. Both corners appear in *Bhagavata Purana* stories about two sisters depicted on this Vishnu-house. One sister is Aditi (nonrestraint or expansion) and the other is Diti (restraint or constriction). Both are married to the rishi Kashyapa (Tortoise) and have a sister, Sati, who is married to Rudra. Diti's story will be discussed below. The story of Aditi illustrates the auspicious expansion of this northeast corner and appears on the middle-floor sanctum at Panels 14–16 (see chapter 9). When the Bhagavan decides to conquer the asura Bali, He enters through Kashyapa into Aditi's womb and she gives birth to Vamana, the Dwarf. Then, in the manner of Surya's light, Vamana expands and in three strides encompasses Earth, Heaven, and the worlds above it. He then receives Bali as a protected devotee, and gives him a residence beneath Earth in Sutala, the "auspicious level" of Rasa. Vamana is present there to protect Bali from the delusion natural to asuras, and from enemies such as Ravana (*BP* 8.15–23).

South. The Unobstructed formation faces the realm of rakshasas on Lanka, where Ravana's youngest brother Vibhishana now presides under the Bhagavan's rule. His rule is explained by the story of Dasharatha's son Rama (Dasharatha Rama), most famously told in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Yama's domain of Naraka is to the south of Lanka (*BP* 5.26). South is dangerous to human welfare. Rakshasas come from there to prey on humans and disrupt their sacrifices, and Yama sends his emissaries from there to seize those whose time it is to die. But a throw of Krishna's wheel Sudarshana easily slays rakshasas, and a blast of his conch Panchajanya brings Yama to heel, for Krishna may counter karmic justice however he chooses (*BP* 10.45.26–50).

West. The Vasudeva formation faces west toward the sea and mountains where, at sunset, asuras emerge from Rasa beneath Earth. Sunlight never penetrates Rasa; light there comes from jewels in the heads of nagas. This is where the asura Bali dwells under Vamana's protection (*BP* 8.22.24–36). Earth sets Rasa's upper limit; Patala (the Deepest Part), which is where Vasuki rules the nagas, sets its lower limit. Beneath Patala is Samkarshana in the form of the snake Ananta, "Infinity," who holds the entire body of Brahma on one of his many heads (*BP* 5.24–25). In Pancharatra rites this endless serpent is visualized as resting on a tortoise sustained by the Bhagavan's power of support (*adharashakti*; *AS* 28.18; Rastelli 2005: 127). This tortoise corresponds to Akupara the Unbounded, the Tortoise of Panel 1 at the southwest corner, whose supporting role beneath Brahma's body is replicated inside it when Vishnu becomes a tortoise (*kurma*) to support Mount Mandara as he uses it to churn the Ocean of Milk (*BP* 8.7.1–12).

As noted earlier, the mandala's southern and western realms converge at the southwest corner, the highly inauspicious corner belonging to Earth in her disintegrating mode as Nirriti (She Who Is Disorder). This corner is the hour of sunset, and during this period Rudra and his ghosts—bhutas—roam around like ghouls (*pishacha*), showing favor toward no one who offends them. The story of Diti, sister to Aditi and Sati, illustrates the danger of this transition from daytime to nighttime. One day at sunset Kama incites Diti to seduce her rishi husband Kashyapa, even though sexual activity during this hour will offend Rudra and his bhutas or "ghosts." As a result, two guardians in Vaikuntha named Jaya (Victory) and Vijaya (Conquest) enter into Kashyapa's fiery semen and become embryonic asura twins in Diti's womb. They are born as the terrifying and destructive asura brothers Hiranyakashipu (Golden Clothes) and Hiranyaksha (Golden Eyes) (*BP* 3.14–19). This story appears in Panels 8 and 9 (chapter 8), in Panel SP3 (chapter 12), and in Panel S5 (chapter 15).

The Two Axes and the Two Epics

When this mapping of directional space is thought of as three-dimensional, it sheds light on two famous epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. According to this three-dimensional model, the mandala's north-south axis is horizontal and the west-east axis is vertical. The horizontal north-south axis maps the conflict between human life in Ayodhya (north) and rakshasa life in Lanka (south), and the *Ramayana* story is about this conflict. According to Bhagavata teachings, late in the Treta Yuga Ravana, king of rakshasas in the south, encroaches on the well-being of humans in the north. This prompts Vasudeva to take birth in Ayodhya as Rama and his three brothers, and prompts Goddess Shri to take birth as Rama's wife Sita. Rama and his brother Lakshmana go to the south, Rama subdues Ocean (Samudra), and they build a bridge to cross the ocean to Lanka. After they slay Ravana and his forces, they retrieve Sita from Ravana's prison, put Ravana's younger brother Vibhishana on the throne, and return to Ayodhya in the north. Rama is then consecrated emperor of Bharata and rules righteously for thousands of years. As noted earlier, to this day Vibhishana rules rakshasas as Rama's righteous devotee (*BP* 9.10–11).

In a similar manner, the vertical west-east axis maps the conflict between asuras in dark Rasa beneath Earth (west) and devas in bright Heaven above Earth (east). Earth thus stands at the junction of their perpetual conflict. The *Mahabharata* tells a story about one such conflict on Bharata. The actors in this case are humans living near the end of the Dvapara Yuga. Duryodhana, his ninety-nine Kaurava brothers, his sister, and other relatives descend from the asuras of darkness; their five Pandava cousins led by Yudhishthira descend from five devas of light. They are in conflict because the "asura" Duryodhana

has taken the throne belonging to the "deva" Yudhishthira, and he has banished the five Pandavas together with their common wife Draupadi. In order to restore the "deva" Pandavas to their proper place, Krishna orchestrates the Great War "on the field of true order, the Kuru field" (*BG* 1.1). The alignment of the armies on the first of eighteen days of battle reveals the problem the Great War is meant to solve. The "deva" Pandavas muster their armies on the western side of the Kuru field, facing east toward the "asura" Kauravas. The Kauravas muster their armies on the eastern side, facing west toward the "deva" Pandavas. But this arrangement inverts dharma's true order: the "deva" Pandavas should be in the east, just as devas are in Heaven; and the "asura" Kauravas should be in the west where they emerge from Rasa at sunset. Krishna's intent is to reestablish the true dharma or righteous order before the Kali Yuga begins; and as the Great War commences he explains this righteous dharma to Arjuna in the famous *Bhagavad-gita*, a highly significant Bhagavata scripture.

Chronology and the Mandala

According to Bhagavata Dharma, the Bhagavan takes the form of Surya the Sun inside Brahma's body of space and time, and measures out Brahma's daytime, which is called a kalpa. Surya likewise measures out the lifetimes of all beings existing inside Brahma's body by means of his cycles of daytime and nighttime. This is chronological time as opposed to eternal Time, kala, which belongs to the nature of God (*BG* 11). But beings existing inside space and time, or "spacetime," live at differing chronological speeds. Above and beneath Earth, for example, devas and asuras live at a chronological speed which, when compared to our lives on Bharata, appears to move very slowly: an entire year for us is merely one day-and-night for them; to us they seem to be "immortal." Ancestors (*pitri*) live at yet another speed: a month for us is merely one day-and-night for them. But all beings are propelled by chronological time according to the pattern established for Brahma: nighttime for sleeping; the last hour of night for waking; sunrise followed by morning, midday, and afternoon for acting; and sunset followed by nighttime for sleeping once again.

The Light of Day, the Darkness of Night

The mandala's four sides map this pattern of day-and-night; moreover, it correlates them to the mandala's spatial meanings. Let us again proceed clockwise and begin on the mandala's northern side. As we noted above, the northeast and southwest corners of the mandala map respectively represent expansion and sunrise, and disintegration and sunset. The mandala displays the opposition of these two corners. If we draw a straight line from one to the

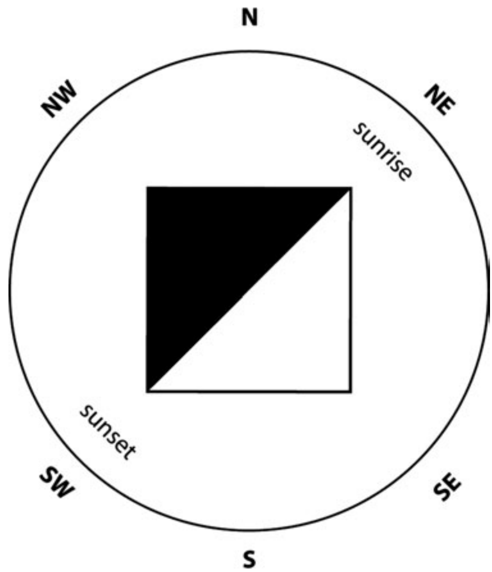


FIGURE 5.12. Ahoratra: Daytime and nighttime on the mandala. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

other, two parallel triangles of equal size emerge, each representing one-half of the unit of time known as the day-and-night or ahoratra. The triangle on the east represents the light of day and the triangle on the west represents the darkness of night (Figure 5.12).

Let us now examine the chronological meanings of the mandala's four sides, beginning again with the north and proceeding clockwise.

NORTH SIDE. The Plower formation's knowledge, jnana, and its power, bala, face north into the final hour of night called brahmamuhurta or Brahma's hour. This is when Brahma, devas and asuras, ancestors and humans wake up for their respective days. Knowledge on this side of the mandala is represented by the mantra consisting of the single syllable *Om*. During this predawn hour, Bhagavatas are to repeat this and other mantras through the repetitive method known as japa; this purifies consciousness in preparation for the approaching daytime. The primary mantra of this side consists of eight syllables, *Om namo narayanaya*, which literally mean "*Om*, veneration to Narayana." It's true meanings, however, are secrets only an acharya can properly teach (as in, for example, the later "Essence of the Threefold Secret," the *Rahasyatrayasara* by the acharya Vedanta Deshika).

EAST SIDE. The Pre-eminently Mighty formation's sovereignty, aishvarya, and its ability to act without entanglement in the fruits of actions, virya, face eastward into morning. On the mandala, morning extends from sunrise at the

northeast corner to midday at the southeast corner. During early and late morning people motivated by desire are to offer oblations in the fire and venerate God's material forms in puja to gain specific results, such as the birth of a son, consecration as a king, or rebirth in Heaven (*BG* 2.42–44). Bhagavatas, however, are to perform such rites without seeking any gain except the pleasure of God, who established ritual acts to sustain the moving universe (*BG* 3.10–26).

South Side. The Unobstructed formation's potency, shakti, and its conquering power, tejas, face south into the afternoon and evening. On the mandala this extends from midday at the southeast corner to sunset at the southwest corner. This period of lengthening shadows is for study, and for protective rites called prayoga, "the hurling of missiles"; in this case the missiles are potent mantras deployed like arrows (*astra*) against demons and asuras approaching as Surya's light contracts and darkness envelops all of Bharata.

West Side. The Bhagavan's three pairs of bhaga attributes or treasures (jnana and bala, aishvarya and virya, shakti and tejas) belong to the Vasudeva formation facing westward into nighttime. This extends from sunset at the southwest corner to night's final hour at the northwest corner where Brahma awakens. The porch entrance marks midnight. In Nandivarman's day, Bhagavata devotees came from the west like asuras, entered through the prakara gateway, and found themselves facing the porch and its nighttime darkness. But like the consecrated asuras Bali and Prahlada, they knew this darkness as merely the gateway to the Light of lights waiting to receive his slaves and servants, as if they were already with him in Vaikuntha.

The Mandala and the Four Ages on Bharata

This brings us to the mandala as a map of the four ages of chronological time on Bharata. According to the cosmology taught in the *Bhagavata Purana* (3.10; 5.11–13), all realms on Earth exist in an unchanging mode of chronological time equivalent to the age called the Treta Yuga, with one exception. Only on the Bharata region of the Jambu continent do the four ages of time known as the Chatur Yuga operate. Each Chatur Yuga consists of four ages of unequal length, reckoned and named according to the throw of dice ceremonially played in the Vedic ceremony to engender a king (*rajasuya*). The winning throw is four, which is true or perfect (*satya* or *krita*). Subsequent throws decline in value, from three (*treta*), to two (*dvapara*), to the losing throw of one (*kali*). The four ages of a Chatur Yuga set are therefore called the Satya or Krita Yuga, the Treta Yuga, the Dvapara Yuga, and the Kali Yuga.

The length of these ages is calculated according to the speed at which time passes during a year of devas and asuras, a year slower than a year of humans on Bharata. Each of these ages is framed by twilights, whose length is calcu-

lated in hundreds of years equal in number to the thousands of the age they frame. Consequently, a single Chatur Yuga consists of 12,000 day-and-nights of devas and asuras. In human terms on Bharata this is 4,320,000 years measured by Surya the Sun. (Further refinements of this system of chronological time will be discussed in the next chapter.)

The four ages of a Chatur Yuga follow a cycle in which the disintegration of the Kali Yuga leads directly into the perfect integration of the Krita Yuga. Chatur Yugas cycle in sets of 1,000, because this is the length of one of Brahma's daytimes (*kalpa*); his nighttime lasts an equal span of time. A year for Brahma consists of 360 of these sets of 1,000 Chatur Yugas, and Brahma lives 100 of his years. Bhagavata Dharma calculates that Brahma has just begun the second half of his life. We exist in the first daytime of his fifty-first year, during the seventh Manu Term, near its midday. This daytime is known as the Varaha Kalpa, Daytime of Boar. The story that explains this name appears at Panels W6 and S5 (chapters 11 and 15).

As we have seen, the mandala of the Vishnu-house devotes each of its four sides to one division of day and night: To the final hour of night on the north, to morning on the east, to afternoon on the south, and to night on the west. And it does the same for the four ages of a Chatur Yuga. God's sculpted formations gaze from the sanctum into one of these four ages: On the north side the Plower gazes into the human realm, into the last hour of night, and into the Krita Yuga. On the east side the Pre-eminently Mighty gazes into the deva realm, into early and late morning, and into the Treta Yuga. On the south side the Unobstructed gazes into the realm of rakshasas and Yama, into early and late afternoon, and into the Dvapara Yuga. And on the west side the complete Vasudeva gazes into the asura realm, into nighttime, and into the Kali Yuga. The Vishnu-house uses visual details to depict this complex of abstract ideas, and does so generously and with refined sophistication, as we shall see.

The Chronology of Vasudeva's Twelve Murtis or Interior Formations

The mandala also encodes the doctrine of Vasudeva's twelve antarvyuhas or "interior formations," each composed of His three formations: Plower, Pre-eminently Mighty, and Unobstructed. These interior formations are called murtis, a term for a material form, and they in turn transform themselves into denser material modes for puja worship. Each interior formation possesses a specific name and they follow a set sequence: 1) Keshava, 2) Narayana, 3) Madhava, 4) Govinda, 5) Vishnu, 6) Madhusudana, 7) Trivikrama, 8) Vamana, 9) Shridhara, 10) Hrishikesha, 11) Padmanabha, and 12) Damodara. All of these names appear in scriptures as names for Vasudeva Krishna, and sculpted panels on the middle floor sanctum represent them (Figure 5.13).[11]

These twelve interior formations also have meanings relating to the twelve months of the year, but the identity of murti and month is not exact. The

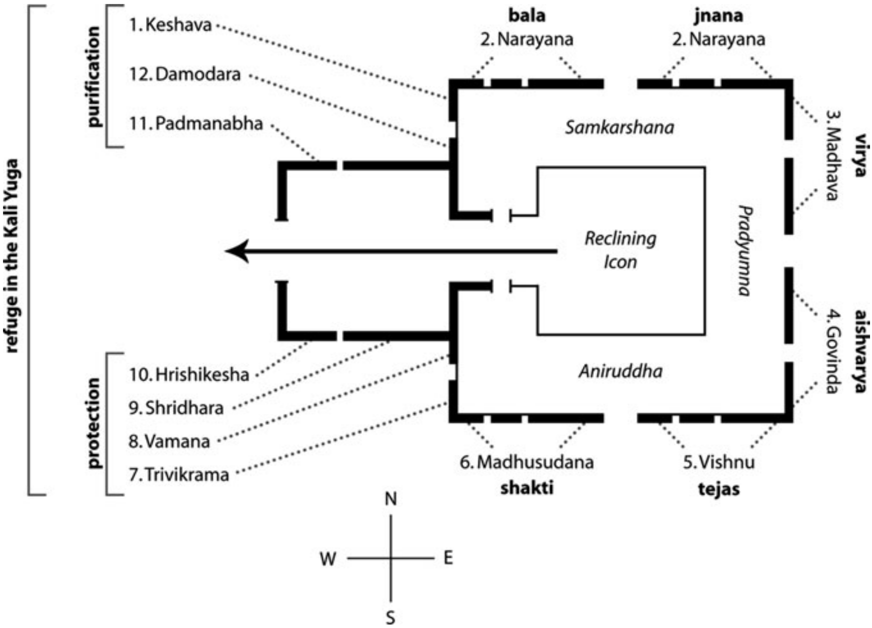


FIGURE 5.13. The six bhagas and the twelve murtis on the middle-floor sanctum and porch. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

Satvata-samhita prescribes a vow that requires the worship of each murti for a month, yet worship begins not on the first day of a month but on its tenth day, and ends with the tenth day of the following month. For example, the vowed worship of the first murti, Keshava, begins on the tenth day of the bright half of the month Margashirsha, continues through the winter solstice, and ends on the tenth day of the month Pushya, when worship of the murti Narayana begins. The cycle concludes with worship of the twelfth murti Damodara, which ends with the tenth day of Margashirsha. Moreover, the sculpted representations of these murtis and the months they imply are as asymmetrically arranged on the mandala, as are its representations of day and night, and of the solstices and equinoxes. The winter solstice falls at the northeast corner of sunrise and the summer solstice at the southwest corner of sunset—this much is symmetrical. But the vernal equinox falls at the southeast corner and the autumnal equinox falls at the center of the western side—at the place of midnight and of the porch entrances into the sanctums. The mandala clearly does not measure chronological time according to the indifferent ticking of the modern clock's seconds, minutes, and hours. Instead it measures time according to patterns etched by the light and dark of sun, moon, and stars. These are measurements of approximate duration, each with its own qualities and values, and the true order of dharma regulates human life accordingly.

6

The Middle-floor Sanctum

The Sculpted Program of the Northern Path

Let us now turn to the sanctum on the middle floor of the Vishnu-house. To gain access, visitors climb the southern staircase inside the vimana leading into its small porch; they descend by way of the corresponding northern staircase. The porch doorway opens into an open-air verandah formed by the roof of the much larger porch below. The sides of the vimana below extend upward to create a low wall enclosing the entire middle story.

The two axes of the mandala organize the sanctum's visual symmetry. On each side an opening in the center marks the place of the vyuha formation depicted on the sanctum below (the porch doorway is the central opening on the western side). Panels are evenly arrayed on both sides of this center: two sets of three on the northern and southern sides, and two sets of two on the western and eastern sides. Slits on each side of the central window on the northern, eastern, and southern sides provide additional light for the two stairways inside.

The two northern and southern panels immediately adjacent to the central windows along the north-south axis are set apart in design from the others, and are wider. They denote one or the other of the two bhagas belonging to the vyuha formation the side represents (jnana and bala for the side facing north; shakti and tejas for the side facing south). On the eastern wall the two panels adjacent to the central window are not set apart by design, but nevertheless denote its formation's two bhagas (aishvarya and virya) by a width greater than the panels at the corners. There are altogether twenty-four sculpted panels on the sanctum and porch (excluding the figures

on the porch face), and they give particular attention to stories found in Books 6–10 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, and especially to the Krishna Story (*Krishnakatha*) in Book 10.

Viewers standing on the verandah at a distance from the porch and sanctum have a sweeping view of the entire western face of the sanctum. The sculpted panels on the northern and southern sides of the porch cannot be seen, however, for they come into view only when walking the narrow path formed by the low wall on one side and the sanctum on the other. Likewise, sculpted panels facing north, east, and south on this sanctum can only be seen up close and one at a time.

The center of the western side is the doorway in the porch. Three figures on the face of the porch stand on each side. The set of three sculpted figures shown in Figure 6.1 is north of the porch doorway, which is to the right. A similar set is to the south of the doorway. Here a male guardian, dvarapala, stands peacefully adjacent to the entrance. He wears a tall crown, holds an unidentified object in his left hand, and rests his right hand on his hip. To his right stands a female in a gracefully relaxed pose. To her right stands a male wearing a tall crown, his hair emerging beneath it at the sides, suggesting recent vigorous motion. He gestures upward with his right hand in the direction of the northern sequence of panels. The set south of the doorway mirrors this arrangement; the two females probably depict the Ganga and Yamuna rivers as persons, reminders that this doorway to the sanctum opens towards the dark waters of Brahma's nighttime where the reclining icon sleeps inside the sanctum.

The Two Paths

The next panels in sight on this western side are on the sanctum. They consist of one pair north of the porch and one pair south of the porch. These pairs reveal that, in contrast to the sanctum below, this sanctum's sculpted program consists of two sequences running parallel, west to east. As illustrated by Figure 6.2, both sequences begin on one side of the porch and end on the sanctum's eastern side with a panel adjacent to its central window.

How are we to understand this arrangement? What are the differences between these sculpted sequences, and why are they in parallel directions? Why don't all the panels form a continuous program in the clockwise directions of circumambulation? The beginning of an answer is offered in the story of Vamana the Dwarf and the asura king Bali, illustrated by southern path panels 14–16. Panel 14 introduces the Bhagavan as Vamana at Bali's horse sacrifice, Panel 15 depicts Vamana taking three strides while Garuda binds Bali as a victim of his own sacrifice, and Panel 16 illustrates the fulfillment of Vamana's promise to Bali after he became a devoted refugee.



FIGURE 6.1. Figures north of the doorway of the porch on the middle floor. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

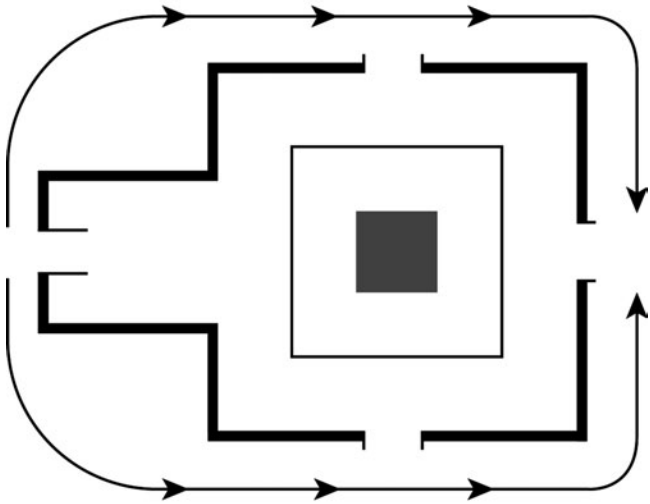


FIGURE 6.2. The two paths of the middle-floor sanctum. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

Vamana promised to guard Bali and his family in Sutala and to keep them from the defilement inherent to underworld waters and to asuras. When Bali's grandfather Prahlada overheard this promise he was astonished and said to Vamana: "Brahma and other devas are mighty because of [the path called] 'Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet.' But Granter of Refuge! We are asuras of wicked ways and vile wombs—why do you graciously bring us to the 'Path of the Southern Doctrine?' You are indeed like the Wishing Tree, for you give equally to everyone who asks" (*BP* 8.23.7).

The two paths Prahlada names appear to correspond to the two sculpted sequences of this sanctum. He identifies the first path as appropriate to "Brahma and other devas." Translated into the fourfold ritual class system of varnas, these devas signify males born of wombs inherently "pure" and therefore qualified for consecration to the Vedas as dvija or "twice-born." "Brahma" denotes Brahmins, and "other devas" led by Indra denote Kshatriyas, and to a lesser extent Vaishyas. These consecrated males are qualified to walk the path called Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet (*Padapadmamakarandanishevana*) with the guidance of appropriate Brahmins. The panels of the northern sequence document this path; it leads to the perception of Vasudeva Krishna as one's master and virya action as His slave or servant.

Prahlada identifies the second path as appropriate to "we asuras of wicked ways and vile wombs." By "we" Prahlada means asura kings like him and his grandson Bali. Translated into the terms of ritual class, they signify rulers who

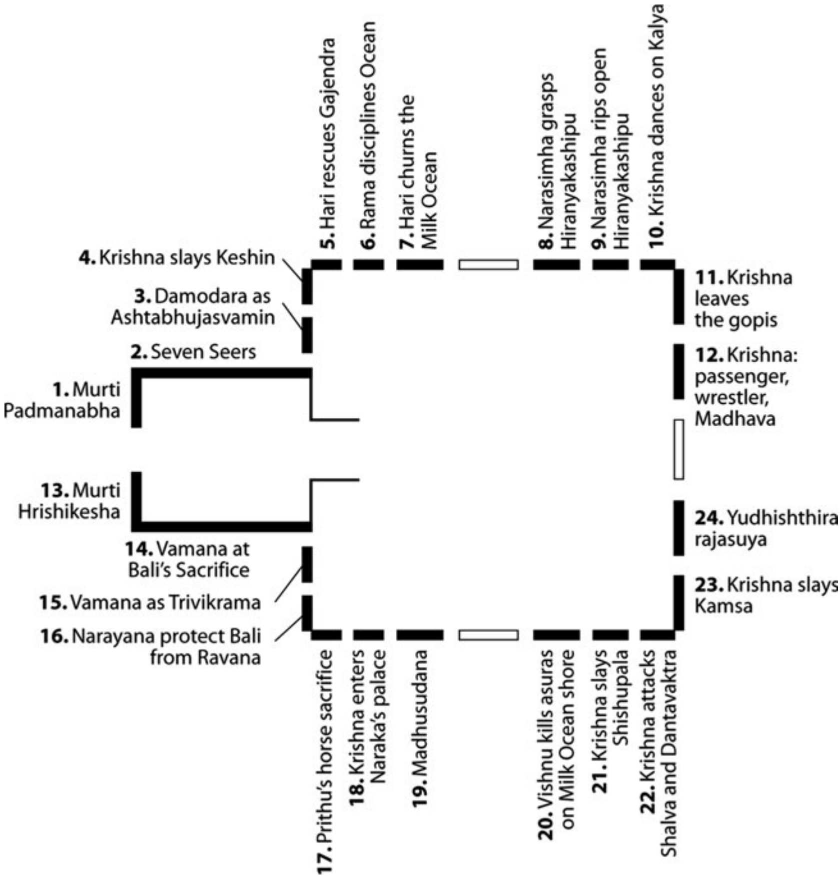


FIGURE 6.3. Two sequences of panels on the middle-floor sanctum. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

are Shudras; and according to Bhagavata Dharma virtually all rulers in the Kali Yuga are Shudras or barbarians. As Shudras, they are born of wombs inherently "impure" and therefore not qualified for consecration to the Vedas and dvija status; and their customs are "impure," for they practice cross-cousin marriage, drink alcohol, and worship yakshas, rakshasas, and asuras. Yet the Pancharatra Agama cleanses them of their inherent "impurity" through its Man-lion Consecration (*nrisimha-diksha*), which Vasudeva teaches to Samkarshana in the *Satvata-samhita* (*SS* 17). This powerful purifying diksha is open to Shudras, women, and all others. Once purified, its sadhakas are analogous to the "twice-born" and have access to the path of Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet, but without its Vedic mantras such as *Om*. Bhagavata Shudras who are rulers are analogous to Prahlada and Bali, and they have further access to the Path of the Southern Doctrine, as Prahlada observes.

The two sequences of this middle-floor sanctum document the ritual career of one such Bhagavata Shudra ruler—Nandivarman Pallavamalla—and use specific events in *Bhagavata* stories to illustrate his steps along both paths to reach virya action and aishvarya sovereignty (Figure 6.3).

"Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet": Sculpted Panels of the Northern Path

The twelve sculpted panels constituting the northern path move clockwise to depict an "awakening" of consciousness that leads to the perception of Vasudeva Krishna as one's master. This process of awakening is told through the lore of the *Bhagavata Purana*, but with allusions to the career of Nandivarman as the paradigmatic devotee. These panels are organized according to the west-east and north-south axes of the mandala, as are those of the southern path. This means that they are *not* to be read as a continuous narrative sequence. The narratives introduced by the panels on the western side continue with the panels on the eastern side; the six panels in between interrupt these narratives to document stages in the purification of the devotee's consciousness. Our discussion of the northern path will begin with the narrative (Panels 1–4 and 11–12), and will then turn to purification of consciousness (Panels 5–10).

The Panels on the Western Side

Panel 1: The Murti Padmanabha

The Panel. The northern path begins with the murti Padmanabha, the eleventh of the twelve interior formations (*antarvyuha*) discussed in the previous chapter (Figure 6.4). Dressed royally and crowned, he stands with two pairs of arms and faces north. His back pair of hands holds the wheel and conch. He rests his front left hand on his hip, and with his front right hand forms the abhayamudra of protection: his open hand with fingers pointed upward and facing the viewer is held at his chest. The murti Padmanabha's name refers to the lotus, padma, at his navel, nabha. His position here invokes the Bhagavan inside the sanctum with Brahma's lotus inside His stomach; as the path begins He offers the protection of refuge or sharana.

Panel 2: The Seven Seers

The Panel. This panel depicts the set of Seven Seers present during each Manu Term (*manvantara*) (Figure 6.5). A new set of Seven Seers appears in each Manu Term, fourteen of which constitute the largest cycle of time, called a kalpa, or one daytime of Brahma (*BP* 8.1; 8.5.1–9; 8.13–14). Each Manu Term



FIGURE 6.4. Panel 1: The murti Padmanabha stands on an altar. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

lasts for seventy-one sets of four ages or yugas (Chatur Yuga) (*BP* 3.22.36; 3.11.24). We, for example, live during the term of the seventh Manu of this kalpa, who is the "son of Sun" (*vaivasvata*) named Shraddhadeva (Faith's Deva); his younger brother, Savarni, will become the next Manu. The events of the Krishnakatha take place during Vaivasvata Shraddhadeva's term as Manu, and each seer depicted here plays important roles in the stories illustrated on



FIGURE 6.5. Panel 2: The seven seers or seven rishis. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

this sanctum and on the floor below. They are named Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Vishvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, and Bharadvaja (*BP* 8.13.5). After 1,200 deva years most of Veda will have been swallowed by time, but the Seven Seers will recover it through their ascetic self-discipline (*tapas*) and preserve it for the new set of four yugas. In this manner fourteen sets of Seven Seers sustain eternal Dharma throughout a kalpa (*BP* 8.14).

The seers dwell above earth and immediately below the pole star, Dhruva, the highest realm visible to the human eye. They circumambulate the base of Vishnu's transcendent realm (*paramapada*), which is the entire realm of space-time upward from Dhruva. From earth they appear as the seven stars constituting the Great Bear constellation (Big Dipper) (*BP* 5.22.17). Here they turn toward the adjacent panel to watch Krishna's life unfold beneath them on earth.

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, the narrating Shuka explains their astral modes to the emperor Parikshit. A star or constellation (*nakshatra*) appears each night in a northwestern line midway between the stars Pulaha and Kratu, who are the two central and dominant seers in the panel. The star or constellation appears there for one hundred human years and then a new star replaces it. Parikshit began his imperial rule when the star Magha was in the middle between Pulaha and Kratu. When the star Purvasadha replaces it the demon Kali will gain in strength, and the son of a Shudra woman will ascend the throne at Magadha. Nanda will be crowned 1,115 years after Parikshit's birth and will destroy all Kshatriyas (*BP* 12.1.26–34). Kings will then be Shudras and against Dharma (*adharma*); gradually society will degenerate (*BP* 12.1.8–9). Kalki will appear on a white horse to establish a new Krita Yuga when Moon, Sun, and Jupiter conjoin in the same house while Pushya ascends (*BP* 12.1.12–14). Kalki on his horse appears below in the two panels flanking the porch entrance.

Panel 3: Ashtabhujasvamin: The Lord with Eight Arms

The Seven Seers' gaze leads us to this panel on the north half of sanctum's west wall. It depicts the murti Damodara, whose name, "has a rope around his waist," refers to an episode in the Krishnakatha when the child Krishna let Yashoda tie him with a rope to a stone mortar (*BP* 10.9). He is depicted here as the Lord with Eight Arms, Ashtabhujavamin, who stands victoriously, a vigorous and assertive warrior holding weapons and objects in his eight hands, the counterpart of the meek submission of the previous panel. Moreoever, he complements the striding dwarf with eight arms (*vamana trivikrama*) depicted in the corresponding place on the sanctum's south half (see Panel 15).

THE PANEL. This crowned and vigorous figure stands slightly off center in front of a throne (Figure 6.6). His torso and head are straight, and the panel's vertical axis runs down the left side of his crown and face. He looks forward and slightly to the south. The bottom of his right foot rests on the throne, his



FIGURE 6.6. Panel 3: Damodara as Ashtabhujasvamin: The Lord with Eight Arms (prior to repair). IFDI.

knee thrusts to the north, and his right thigh and calf press together ready to spring into action. The perspective allows the viewer to see his entire right foot as if looking down from above. His left leg stretches down to the floor beneath the throne and is straight but slightly diagonal to the axis of his body.

Each arm holds a weapon. On his right side his hand in back holds the wheel. Beneath its elbow an arm holds the handle of the sword he pulls out of a sheath on his lower back. Beneath it an arm holds the mace. His front arm

rises straight out from the shoulder and bends upward at the elbow to take an arrow from the quiver on his back. On his left side his hand in back holds the conch. Beneath it a hand holds a shield. The hand beneath the shield has disappeared, but may have held a second quiver, or a noose, or the tusk of an elephant, but most likely a lotus. His front hand, at the level of the right side of his chest, holds a bow near its top; its bottom appears to rest on the floor in front of the throne. The angles of his two front arms express skill in archery.

At the north side of this panel stands a crowned two-armed figure holding the veneration gesture (*anjalimudra*): the palms of both hands with fingers pointed upward are brought together at the chest. He faces forward, turns slightly to the southwest, and is probably Garuda, who similarly appears in human form in other panels (see for example Panels 5 and 15). Above him in the corner is the small face and torso of a two-armed male. His left arm rises to the side of his face and his open hand bends to the south, with his other hand at the level of his chest. A similar figure may match him in the south corner, for suggestions of arms are visible, but the damage is too great to tell.[1]

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the murti Damodara, the last of the twelve interior formations, and it signifies the darkness of late night. It also refers to a standing icon known for his eight arms; in Tamil he is *Attapuyakarattan* and in Sanskrit he is *Ashtabhujasvamin*. He stands facing west in a temple that in the eighth century was in Attiyur, a village south of Kanchipuram's wall and moat. The city envelops it today as "Little Kanchi" or "Vishnu Kanchi." The eight-armed icon is a powerful refuge, as the poet Pey said in the penultimate stanza of *Munran Tiruvantati*:

> Holding all eight weapons,
> He is an unvanquished victor,
>   he who dwells in the house
>   of the Lord with Eight Arms
> For one day,
>   to slay a tough crocodile
>   in the pond,
> He merely aimed the wheel and flung it—
> Our shelter is the sole of his foot.

Hari used his blazing wheel to free the Indra of Elephants (*gajendra*) from the crocodile of grasping desire as it tried to drown him in the cool waters of married life. The first panel facing north (Panel 5) illustrates this Gajendra story and is discussed in chapter 7.

Finally, this panel represents the first set of ceremonies of the northern path, but with specific reference to Nandivarman's participation in them at the temple of Attapuyakarattan; these liturgical events were crucial to Nandivarman's career as Bhagavata emperor. Around 745–746 he received "Consecration

to the Man as Lion" (*narasimha-diksha*) at the feet of the Eight-armed Lord standing in Attiyur. This purified him for the two parts of "Consecration to the Icon" (*vibhava-diksha*). The first part took place at this temple and its second part at Sri Rangam, and Kalikanri recorded each event with a poem.[2] In the first stanza about the Eight-armed Lord he records Nandivarman's purification through his consecration to Man-lion:

> Shiva burned up the wandering Three Cities,
> Lord Brahma sits high on a lotus,
> And they marvel,
> For three worlds roar like waves
> Thundering in the great sea
> As they properly worship him,
> The lion with burning nails and slicing teeth
> Who splits Golden's body into two—
> "Who is this person?" I ask,
> "I am the one dwelling in the house
> Of the Eight-Armed-Lord"
> he says.

Golden (*hiranyan*) represents the sadhaka's arrogant self-sufficiency derived from an asura-like impurity. Consecration to Man-lion tears the arrogance apart and removes the impurity. We shall discuss this story at length in chapter 8. The voices at the end appear throughout nine of the poem's ten stanzas. The questioner represents Nandivarman Pallavamalla, who seeks refuge and wonders about each stage in the liturgies. The presiding acharya answers him on behalf of the icon and himself, for the Eight-armed Lord resides in both during the consecrations.

The eight objects held by the icon in Attiyur match those held by the figure sculpted here, if we assume the latter's missing hand held a lotus. Kalkanri describes these objects in his poem's third stanza:

> Pure gold gleams
> As he holds an arrow in his right hand
> and a firm bow with a mace,
> a conch, and a bright sword,
> Yet the vast light of a wheel
> with a shield
> and a graceful flower
> Is brighter, how can this be?
> When angry hate raged in that elephant
> He threw it with the mere twist
> Of one white tusk
> And he is black like a cloud—

"Who is this person?" I ask,
"I am the one dwelling in the house
Of the Eight-Armed-Lord"
he says.

The elephant in this case is not Gajendra, but Kamsa's raging "Chaplet of Blue Waterlilies" (*kuvalaya-apida*). His name captures Kamsa's asura nature, because blue waterlilies bloom only at night. After Krishna kills Kuvalayapida he and Balarama take his tusks into Kamsa's wrestling arena.

This panel is carefully positioned, because Krishna's slaughter of Kuvalayapida mentioned here begins an episode that concludes with Krishna standing victoriously in the east-facing panel directly opposite (Panel 12). Here Krishna enters the arena with one elephant tusk over his shoulder and there he slays the wrestler Chanura. This eight-armed Damodara murti thus begins a transformation that ends with the Madhava murti standing there.

Panel 4: Krishna Slays the Asura Keshin in the Shape of a Horse

THE STORY. Kamsa, who has usurped Mathura's throne from his father Ugrasena, knows that Vasudeva's two sons intend to kill him: his son by Devaki together with Rohini, who is Samkarshana Balarama, and his son by Devaki alone, who is Vasudeva Krishna. Narada tells Kamsa that the boys reside in the cowherd settlement of Vraja called Gokula, in the house of the cowherd chieftain Nanda and his wife Yashoda. By birth the boys are Kshatriyas, but they are growing up as if they are cowherd boys or gopas. Having learned this, Kamsa sends various asuras to slay them, but until now the brothers have defeated them all. Kamsa finally sends the asura named Keshin (He Who Has Long Hair), who takes the shape of a huge horse. Keshin attacks Krishna in Gokula, but the boy wins once again: Krishna thrusts his arm down the horse's throat, expands his arm, and strangles him—and the huge horse splits in two like a karkatika fruit. Narada then appears, praises Krishna for this deed, and predicts further conquests in the future.

After this Kamsa sends Maya's son Vyoma, whose name means "air," but more significantly "one who cannot be saved." Vyoma has great skill with illusions and appears in Gokula disguised as a gopa boy. While the cowherd boys are playing as if they are rams, Vyoma carries them off one by one and locks them up in a mountain cave. But just as a tawny lion (*hari*) of great power attacks a wolf (*vikra*), Krishna attacks Vyoma, who now assumes an enormous asura form. But the Unfallen (Achyuta) holds him fast, throws him to the ground, and slays him as one slays the victim in a sacrifice. He then opens the cave, releases the boys, and they all return home (*BP* 10.36.20–21; 10.37).

With these two events, Krishna's career as a cowherd growing up in Vraja in the Gokula settlement and the Vrindavan forest comes to an end. The

corresponding corner panel on the eastern side portrays the next episode in the brothers' careers: They leave Gokula for Mathura to live as the Kshatriyas they were born to be.

THE PANEL. Krishna in the center of this panel stands on his left leg placed on a raised platform (Figure 6.7). A tall cone, turban, or crown caps his head. He faces forward and looks down at the horse Keshin facing south, whose head he has seized and pulled up. The horse is left to stand on its hind legs at the bottom of the panel while its front legs dangle in the air. Krishna pushes his right foot down on the middle of the horse's back, pulls its upper jaw upward with his right hand, and thrusts his left arm down its throat to strangle it. In the upper corners two male figures mirror each other, both with a crown or turban resembling Krishna's, which suggests they are gopas. The left arm of one and the right arm of the other stretch up in a gesture of victory bracketing Krishna's crown or turban; with the other hand each forms a damaged mudra at his chest.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. Krishna's title Keshava refers to this episode; here he represents the murti Keshava, the first of the twelve interior formations. The Keshava murti, like the brahmamuhurta, embodies the potency for a prosperity and longevity worthy of kings, unfolding clockwise around the mandala as murtis, as the divisions of day-and-night, and as stages in a royal sadhana represented by episodes from the *Bhagavata Purana*. Keshava Krishna begins the circle and Ashatabhujaswami ends it.

This panel corresponds to the month of Margashirsha, to the final hour of night known as Brahma's hour or brahmamuhurta, and to the "awakening" process that reaches its climax at the northeast corner of sunrise. The six panels on the northern side, which immediately follow this panel, document the stages of this "awakening" during the brahmamuhurta. But we shall leave them for the next chapter.

This episode alludes to two Vedic sacrifices performed for the sake of prosperity and longevity. Most obvious is the ancient horse sacrifice or ashvamedha, which proclaimed its royal sponsor to be the chakravartin, the pivot of the realm depicted as a chakra or wheel. Ruling at its center, he matched the turning of his wheel to Surya's clockwise turning around the mandala of Earth, thereby gaining prosperity and life. By establishing its royal sponsor as the chakravartin to whom all other rulers are subordinate, the king is declared the supreme ruler or parameshvara, an emperor. Nandivarman received this imperial status as a Bhagavata when the second part of the diksha consecration, which had begun in Attiyur (the previous panel), was completed at Sri Rangam (this panel). Tirumangai recorded those ceremonies in separate poems.

In the ashvamedha, the "king of sacrifices," the horse is suffocated like other victims, either by keeping its mouth and nose closed or by a noose (*SB*



FIGURE 6.7. Panel 4: Krishna slays the asura Keshin in the shape of a horse. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

3.8.1.15–16; 13.2.2.1). He is then cut up with a golden slaughtering knife (*SB* 13.2.2.16). But unlike other victims, only the horse's left side is used for offerings, whereas meat is taken from the right and left sides of other animals.[3] This implies that the golden knife literally or conceptually splits the horse into halves, just as Bhima splits Jarasamdha into halves, as we shall see.

The other sacrifice is the ritual context for sacrificing the horse, a ceremony lasting five days. It produces soma, which is a drink then offered to Indra in Heaven, because the king of devas loves soma. Pleasing Indra with libations of soma brings "deathlessness" or amrita to those who live on Earth. But in Heaven soma is "deathlessness" in the form of a drink called amrita; from the last hour of their night to their evening twilight, Indra and Bali, the king of asuras, fight to possess this elixir. And the Bhagavan arranges this context, as we shall see.

After Keshin is dead, the seer Narada appears secretly to tell Krishna that this concludes his cowherd conquests. He foretells the major episodes that will now unfold, beginning with his departure from Gokula in Akrura's chariot, as depicted directly opposite this panel by Panel 11, facing east. Narada says to Krishna (in my paraphrase):

> Krishna, Krishna, unknowable Self, Ruler of Unified Consciousness (*yogesha*), Ruler of the Moving Universe (*jagadishvara*), you have descended as leader of Satvatas to destroy Diti's sons and the tormenting rakshasas who live on earth, and to preserve boundaries (*setu*). Out of play (*lila*) you destroyed this son of Diti, and day after tomorrow I will watch you slay Chanura, Mushtika, and the other wrestlers, and the elephant Kuvalayapida and Kamsa. Then I will see you slay the Conch, Yavana, Mura, and Naraka, and take away the Parijata tree after conquering Indra. Later I will see you marry the daughters of warriors through your virya, and free Nriga from sin at Dvaraka. Then I will watch you accept the Syamantaka jewel and Jambavati, and bring the Brahmin's dead children back from Death, and destroy Paundraka, burn Kashi, and slay Dantavaktra and Shishupala the Chedi king. Whatever other virya deeds you perform while dwelling in Dvaraka I will see, and then I will see you in the chariot of Arjuna in the shape of Time (*kalarupa*) intent on annihilating armies of men. I prostrate to you who are uninvolved by maya, and who, for the sake of play (*kridartha*), takes the form of a man to lead the Yadus, Vrishnis, and Satvatas. (*BP* 10.37.11–24)

Narada's statement may have been inserted into the Krishnakatha to gloss *keshava* (having long abundant hair), the man with long and abundant hair who slayed the horse with a long mane.[4] Krishna as Ruler of Unified Consciousness, Ruler of the Moving Universe, abode of all things, and leader of Yadus, Vrishnis, and Satvatas expresses Pancharatra doctrine. The Yadus and

Vrishnis constitute the set of clans to which Krishna belongs, but the Satvatas are his own clan. *Satvata* also refers to those who worship in the Satvata way, which is the Pancharatra Agama. Moreover, the Pancharatra scripture known as the *Satvata-samhita* explains the consecrations represented by the panels on this sanctum facing north, as we shall see in chapters 7 and 8. Finally, *keshava* is glossed as the murti producing chronological time, just as Keshava produces Krishna's deeds following his cowherd career.

Nevertheless, Kamsa sends one more asura, Vyoma, who steals the playing boys and puts them in a cave. Krishna throws him down and suffocates him like the animal victim (*pashumarana*) in a sacrifice. What is this Vyoma episode about? We already know that Krishna's slaughter of Keshin climaxes his career in Gokula, so Vyoma's slaughter must complete that climactic act in some way. The reference to the cowherds playfully acting like rams (*meshaya*) and other animals, and Vyoma's death in the manner of a sacrificial beast, suggest the answer. During the horse sacrifice, the horse is tied with a ram and a gomriga (bovine deer) to a stake (*yupa*) in front of the eastern ahavaniya fire for offerings. In addition, twelve animals (all but one a goat) are tied around the horse as offerings for specific devas and are sacrificed after the horse (*SB* 13.2.2.1–11; and note 4, pp. 298–299). This story of Vyoma putting gopas imitating rams and other animals into a closed-up cave as if to suffocate them, and of Krishna then suffocating him "who cannot be saved," appears to represent the sacrifice of these additional victims to complete the horse sacrifice. This Vyoma episode thus draws a ritual boundary around Krishna's gopala career, just as another episode draws a similar boundary around his childhood after he defeats Kaliya. We shall discuss it in Chapter 8.

The significance of this Keshava episode is explained by the idea that the horse is the vajra for Kshatriyas. The Master of Progeny assigned other sacrifices to devas, but kept the horse sacrifice for himself; it is a diamond bolt of lightning (*vajra*) that stamps down his enemy, represented in the ashvamedha by a slain dog plunged into water under the horse's feet (*SB* 13.2.1.1; 13.1.2.9). The gandharva king named Chitraratha once told Arjuna that when Indra used his vajra against Vritra, it split into a hundred and ten pieces on Vritra's head. These pieces then took on differing bodies, so that "Whatever is a means to success in the world is known as an embodiment of the thunderbolt." The Kshatriya's steeds embody his vajra. The king's vajra resembles Indra's horse, Ucchaishravas, and the horses born of Lakshmi. Chitraratha promised the latter to Arjuna (*Mahabharata* 1.158.45–50; van Buitenen 1: 322).

Krishna's slaughter of Keshin eliminates Kamsa's means to success, and it could not be otherwise, for Krishna tells Arjuna, "Of weapons I am the vajra" (*BG* 10.28). Kamsa's horse vajra is gone, and his elephant emblem as an Indra of Men is about to fall.

This story in the Krishnakatha leads directly into Krishna's departure for Mathura (*BP* 10.37–38). These two stories are depicted along the west-east axis,

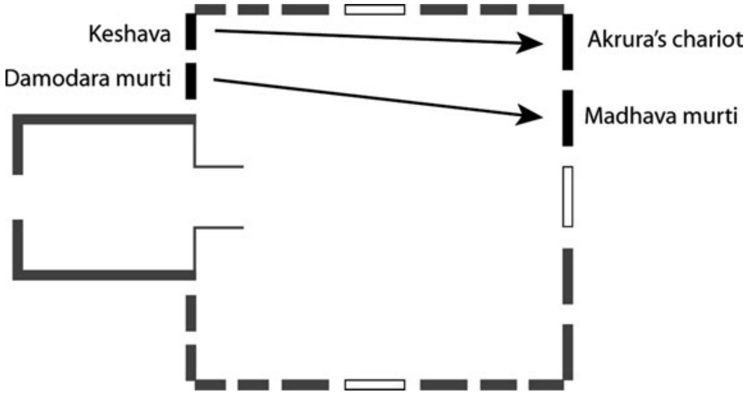


FIGURE 6.8. Diagram: Keshava and Akrura's chariot. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

the first here and the second on the corresponding corner panel facing east. To continue, therefore, we must skip the intervening panels facing north and turn directly to the first panel on the east. Figure 6.8 illustrates the pattern.

The Panels on the Eastern Side

Panel 11: Krishna Addresses the Gopis from Akrura's Chariot

THE STORY. Krishna and Balarama have by now destroyed everyone whom Kamsa had sent to slay them, and Kamsa is of course enraged. He puts Vasudeva and Devaki in shackles and devises plans to kill the brothers in Mathura. He tells his companions Chanura and Mushtika to pretend to be wrestlers and kill Krishna and Balarama in a public match. He tells his best elephant keeper to station the royal elephant Kuvalayapida at the entrance to the wrestling arena and kill them there. And he orders the Bow Sacrifice or Danuryaga to begin on the fourteenth day, and the animals desired by Rudra Shiva, the Most Bountiful King of Bhutas, sacrificed to him.

Kamsa then summons Akrura, a Yadu leader and a relative of Krishna, who among Vrishnis and Bhojas is famous for acting in the best interest of others. Kamsa receives him with friendly warmth, and asks for a favor. "I know that devas have taken refuge with Vaikuntha and are seeking my death. Go to Nanda's Vraja and bring Balarama and Krishna to Mathura along with Nanda and the gopas with their tribute. Use as an excuse the Bow Sacrifice and the sights of the city. Once they are there either the royal elephant or wrestlers will kill them. I shall then get rid of all my enemies: Vasudeva and the other leaders of the Vrishnis, Bhojas, Dasharhas, my father Ugrasena and my brother Devaka, and finally everyone else. My guru is my father-in-law, Jarasandha of Magadha, and my friends are Dvivida, Shambara, Naraka, and Bana. Once we

have eliminated all kings who side with devas, I shall enjoy Earth just as I please" (*BP* 10.36.28–37).

Akrura responds carefully. He commends Kamsa for seeking to overcome obstacles, as a king should. Yet whether one succeeds or fails, one should be the same, he observes, for results come through fate (*daiva*). If fate thwarts anyone intent on getting what he wants, without fail the pain of joy and sorrow has him in its grip. "Nevertheless, I shall carry out your command" (*BP* 10.36.16–39).

The next morning Akrura sets out for Gokula, joyously anticipating the sight of the Bhagavan Krishna, and reaches there at sunset. Balarama and Krishna receive him graciously, and he tells them all about Kamsa's plans. At sunrise the next morning they are ready to leave and the gopis are devastated. Weeping and crying, "Krishna! Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!" they approach Akrura's chariot, but he starts it moving, and Nanda and the others in carts filled with tributes of milk for the king follow behind. The gopis pursue Krishna, who is in Akrura's chariot, longing for him to reply to their pleas, but "I shall return" is all he says. They watch him until they can no longer see the chariot, and return home without any hope that Govinda will return. Yet day and night they sing of him and his acts, and in so doing live free of sorrow (*BP* 10.38–39.37).

The Panel. Krishna is depicted standing in the chariot with Balarama to his left and Akrura to his right (Figure 6.9). Akrura stands respectfully with arms crossed. The man gazing from behind between the heads of Krishna and Akrura appears to be Nanda in an adjacent cart. Krishna has one pair of arms; his left hand rests at his waist and his right hand forms a damaged mudra gesture. The chariot is represented beneath by one wheel, and by the horse rearing up with early-morning energy, facing south toward Mathura. The two figures above this scene remain unidentified.

The location of this panel facing east at the northeast corner illustrates the moment after sunrise when Krishna turns to face the women he has entranced through his beauty, his heroic deeds, and his love. This begins the gopis' clinging to Krishna in separation (*viraha bhakti*). Their pure or sattvika clinging is what the sadhaka experiences when "awake." According to Kalikanri, Nandivarman tasted this gopi viraha bhakti during his consecration at the feet of the Eight-armed Lord in Attiyur. When stunningly beautiful women took over his mind he looked at the Eight-armed Lord through new eyes:

> "However we think about his complexion,
> Still we know nothing," they say
> As their bangles,
> Their minds,
> And all their fullness



FIGURE 6.9. Panel 11: Krishna addresses the gopis from Akrura's chariot. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

Enter to become my mind,
"Who is this person like a cloud
Wearing the black of the boiling sea,
The purple of the bilberry,
And the dark blue of the lily

Blossoming with time?"
they ask,
"I am the one dwelling in the house
Of the Eight-Armed-Lord"
he says [6]

Kalikanri plays on the double meaning of *vannam/varna* as "color" and "nature." Krishna's dark color hides his true complexion from these lovers ardently desiring to know him. Nandivarman's transformed consciousness now longs for the Supreme Male, but he remains as impenetrable as the dazzling black cloud these gopis cannot understand.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. All attention in the panel is on Krishna at sunrise, the cause of the gopis' weeping; the viewer stands in their place as they hear him say, "I shall return." Krishna is the content of jnana or knowledge, and the gopis therefore "see" him day and night by means of their pure longing. Krishna thus fulfills his promise to return, for Madhava is with them in Gokula even while he is away in Mathura. Moreover, this gopi perception of Krishna's presence in his absence represents the consecrated devotee's consciousness fully "awake" as a result of the sadhana inaugurated by the diksha, whose completion is represented by the Keshava panel opposite to this on the western side.

Panel 12: (A) Krishna Sits with Balarama in Akrura's chariot; (B) Krishna as "Hari the Ruler of Yoga" Wrestles Chanura in Mathura as Kamsa Watches; (C) Krishna Stands as Victorious Madhava

This panel consists of three different scenes (A, B, C; Figure 6.10). We shall discuss them individually from the viewer's right to left (from north to south). The entire panel represents the murti Madhava, the third interior formation. The sequence of scenes north to south illustrates three aspects of the virya of the Pre-eminently Mighty formation. The source of virya is represented by Krishna sitting in front of Balarama, for they are identical to Narayana sitting in front of, and upon, Samkarshana the Snake. Virya in action is represented by Krishna wrestling Chanura, for Krishna wrestles with passion and slays with violence, but is unaffected all the while. Virya embodied for worship appears at the end as the murti Madhava standing stiffly as an icon.

Scene A: Krishna Sits with Balarama in Akrura's Chariot

THE STORY. After Akrura's chariot leaves Gokula, it reaches the Yamuna River, where he stops. Nanda's chariot goes on ahead, but Krishna and Balarama go to the river for their morning bath (*BP* 10.39.38–57; 10.40). They return and sit



FIGURE 6.10. Panel 12: (Viewer's right to left) (A) Krishna sits with Balarama in Akrura's chariot; (B) Krishna as "Hari the Ruler of Yoga" wrestles Chanura in Mathura as Kamsa watches; (C) Krishna stands as Victorious Madhava. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

in the chariot in the shade while Akrura bathes. Akrura follows the prescribed rites, recites the "ancient prayer" (*brahma sanatana*), and immerses himself. Under water he sees Krishna and Balarama sitting as the Supreme Person and the Plower Snake. Startled, he emerges from the water, looks at the chariot, and sees Krishna and Balarama sitting there as he had left them.

Akrura again immerses himself in the Yamuna's pure waters and again he sees the transcendent Bhagavan. He sees the Snake Ruler with a thousand crowned hoods, white in color with a blue garment, praised by siddhas, charanas, gandharvas, and asuras bowing their heads. He sees the four-armed Person seated on the Snake at peace, dark blue in color with a yellow garment, his reddish eyes like lotus petals. Numerous attendants praise him, including nine (or twelve) devis.[5]

Akrura responds with prayer. He first addresses the cause of everything he sees underwater as Narayana, the unmanifest Primordial Person from whose navel the lotus emerges, and from it Brahma, and from Brahma all these worlds. (The unmanifest Narayana in the waters, of course, describes the reclining icon on the other side of this wall inside the sanctum.) He then mentions five ways people worship Narayana: first, worship through unified consciousness (*yoga*); second, worship through ritual action (*karma*); and third, worship through the renunciation of ritual in favor of "knowledge as a sacrifice" (*jnana-yajna*). Fourth is the Sanskrit rites prescribed by the Bhagavan for worship of him either in one or in many material forms (*murti*). Fifth is worship of him in the shape of Shiva (*shiva-rupina*) according to the path taught by Shiva (*shivoktena margena*), but with differences according to the acharya. To explain how this is a way to worship Narayana, Akrura says that devotees of other devas may not know it, but they worship the Bhagavan because as Ruler he makes all devas. As Krishna will later teach Arjuna, just all rivers flow to the sea, all worship goes to Narayana (*BG* 9.23–25).

Akrura then describes the Bhagavan's forms as modifications of matter (*prakriti*). He begins with his unmanifest subtle body as the ground plan of the gross body; the Bhagavan uses this ground plan to construct spacetime by means of Brahma and the lotus and then playfully "descends" into it as avatars (*BP* 10.40.11–22). Akrura venerates these material forms (*murti*) in the following sequence:

> Causal Fish, and Horse-head who is the death of Madhu and Kaitabha;
> Unbounded the Great who supports Mandara Mountain, and the
> form of Boar who lifts up Earth;
> Wonderous Lion who removes fear from the world of the good, and
> Dwarf who extends beyond the three realms;
> Master of Brighus who cuts down the tree of arrogant dominion, and
> Eminent Raghu who is the end of Ravana;
> Satvata masters Vasudeva, Samkarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha;
> Buddha the Pure who deludes Daityas and Danavas, and Kalki's
> shape who destroys those who become mlecchas.

The sequence thus reads: 1) Fish, 2) Hayagriva as Madhusudana, 3) Tortoise, 4) Boar, 5) Man-lion, 6) Dwarf, 7) Parashurama, 8) Raghava Rama, 9–12) the four Satvata heroes, 13) Shakyamuni Buddha, and (14) Kalki.

Akrura confesses his limitations and acknowledges Narayana's grace. He is unable to control his mind propelled by desire and takes refuge at the Bhagavan's feet, but even this act derives from Narayana's prior grace. He ends his prayer by venerating the four formations: Vasudeva, the Plower as the dwelling place of all beings, and the Pre-eminently Mighty and the Un-



FIGURE 6.11. Panel 12 A: Krishna and Balarama sit in Akrura's chariot. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

obstructed as the twofold Ruler of Senses. He is a refugee (*prapanna*) seeking their protection (*BP* 10.40.24–30).

The pool of water in this episode is pure because Krishna earlier removed its defilement, the kalmasha embodied by the naga named Kaliya. That episode, depicted at the eastern corner of the north wall, will be discussed in chapter 8. Akrura sees underwater what a sadhaka knows when he performs morning rites after Gopala has purified his consciousness (*chitta*). He knows that the Supreme Ruler (*parameshvara*) sits on the Plower Snake watching Brahma live out his days as the spacetime in which he is worshiping.[6] This astounding perception is fraught with fearful implications, which is why Krishna gestures southward with the abhayamudra to reassure Akrura performing the brahma sanatana.

The Panel, Scene A. This first scene is of Krishna and Balarama sitting in the chariot as Akrura sees them when he emerges from the pure Yamuna water (Figure 6.11). Krishna's badly damaged face gazes directly east toward the viewer. He is dressed royally with a tall crown, has one pair of arms, and sits on a seat, his right leg drawn up and his left leg pendent. His left hand rests on his thigh. His right arm bends at the elbow and his hand forms a damaged mudra, perhaps the mushtimudra of the fist: the four fingers fold tightly into the palm and the thumb wraps over the forefinger. If so, it refers to the wrestling match ahead: Mushtika, which may mean "He of the Fist," is the wrestler Balarama will fight; Chanura, which may mean "He Who Injures the Chest," will fight Krishna with his fist. Krishna's "mudra of the fist" explains why Balarama looks over Krishna's right shoulder, as if he is talking to him about what lies ahead. Balarama, whose face is damaged, also has a tall crown and one pair of arms, and sits with legs crossed behind Krishna. Only his head tilting southward, his right shoulder, and his bent right knee are visible. He may gesture with his right hand, but damage makes it uncertain. In the panel's present condition, nothing is depicted above these brothers.

Scene B: Krishna as "Hari the Ruler of Yoga" Wrestles Chanura in Mathura as Kamsa Watches

The Story. By sunset Akrura's chariot reaches Mathura, and they meet the gopas led by Nanda camped outside the city. Balarama and Krishna stay with them for the night, but Akrura continues into the city, reports their arrival to Kamsa, and returns home. The next morning the cowherds walk into the city to see its sights, and the city women praise the beauty of the brothers. Krishna seeks clothing appropriate to this Yadava capital and asks a royal washerman for the proper attire. The man arrogantly refuses and abuses him verbally, but Krishna merely nips off his head and everyone gets fine clothes. A friendly weaver adds to the brothers' attire, and Krishna in return gives him prosperous well-being in this life, and after death emancipation with Krishna's

own shape. Sudama, a garland maker, welcomes the brothers to his home in veneration: "You two are the supreme cause of the entire moving universe, and a portion (*amsha*) of You has come to protect and assure well being. You are the friends and the atmans of the ever-moving universe, impartial in vision and the same toward all living beings, even though You enjoy the one who enjoys You" (*BP* 10.41.46–47). Sudama garlands them, and as a reward chooses unswerving devotion to the atman of all things, friendship with bhaktas, and supreme compassion for all beings. Madhava next meets Trivakra (She Who Is Bent Thrice), a hunchback servant of Kamsa with ointments for the body. She smears the brothers' chests and arms, enhancing Balarama's whiteness and Krishna's blackness. In return Krishna makes her body straight, but graciously defers her offer of her courtesan services.

The brothers are now dressed properly and enter the Shrine of the Bow where the Sacrifice of the Bow is celebrated. But Krishna grabs the Bow, strings it, draws it, and snaps it in two with a sound so loud that it terrifies Kamsa in his palace. The brothers use the broken Bow's pieces to slay soldiers dispatched to the scene, and then leave calmly to wander the city. At sunset they return to their camp for the night.

After sunrise the next morning, Kamsa has the wrestling arena consecrated and decorated, and Mathura's people gather and take their seats. Nanda and his gopas offer their milk gifts to Kamsa, and find a platform to sit on. As Krishna and Balarama are walking to the arena, Kuvalayapida, the huge royal elephant, attacks them. Krishna, however, throws him, breaks off the elephant's tusks, and uses one to kill him and his keeper. Holding this tusk over his shoulder, Krishna enters the arena with his brother, and the wrestlers confront them. Chanura tells Krishna that he and Balarama have been summoned by the king to wrestle. "Subjects who please royalty by mind, act, and word," he says, "acquire majesty and wealth (*shri*); those who do not reap the opposite. It's well known that you cowherds play at wrestling while grazing cattle in the forest. You and we should act to please the royalty, for the king is made of all beings, and therefore beings will be pleased with us" (*BP* 10.43.33, 35). Krishna's reply is enigmatic: "Even we who wander the forest are subjects of the king of Bhojas, and we shall always act to please him, it is our highest kindness" (*BP* 10.43.37).

Chanura then wrestles Krishna and Mushtika wrestles Balarama. Chanura beats on Krishna's chest with his fists, illustrating the possible meaning of his name, "He injures the chest." But Krishna seizes his arms, whirls him around and around, and throws him to the ground dead. Mushtika slugs Balarama, likewise illustrating the possible meaning of his name, "He of the fist." But Balarama kills him with a slap of his hand. Three other wrestlers die and the others flee. The brothers now summon their fellow gopas to come and dance on the arena floor, Kamsa's musicians and their own anklets providing the music. This spectacle pleases everyone except Kamsa, and he orders the next

stage of his long-range plan, the slaughter of Nanda, of Vasudeva, and of Ugrasena (*BP* 10.44.17–28; 30–33).

The Panel, Scene B. This second scene portrays Krishna as Hari the Ruler of Yoga (Yogeshvara Hari), about to throw Chanura (Figure 6.12).[7] The two wrestlers of equal height stand in a locked grip, each with one pair of arms. Krishna on the south has tied up his loincloth and has removed his crown, revealing long hair in a bun on the top of his head. Chanura on the north wears a wrestler's garb: a loincloth, a double belt around his abdomen, and a turban tying his long hair. Krishna has the advantage as he stretches his right arm across Chanura to grasp the left side of his belt; his left arm either disappears behind his opponent or has been erased by damage. Krishna's right leg stretched diagonally to the south supports him as he steps with his left leg in front of Chanura's right leg to pull him off balance. Krishna glances downward with a smile, but Chanura, whose left foot vainly seeks support near the chariot bottom of the previous scene, looks straight ahead with grim knowledge of impending death.

Directly above, separated by a ledge, is a platform on which two crowned men and one woman sit with legs drawn up as they watch the scene below (Figure 6.13). Kamsa, to the north on the viewer's right, looks down; he rests his right hand on his right thigh, and stretches his left arm upward; his open hand may signal the beginning of the wrestling, or alarm at Chanura's impending death. The man sitting to his right also rests his right hand on his right thigh, but his left arm is not visible. The woman to his right grips an object upright in her right hand, but her left arm is also not visible. These two figures are not identified, but they do not appear agitated, perhaps because the wrestling has just begun.

The Panel's Meanings. This wrestling scene alludes to the "death" of "the Pallava Wrestler" as an Indra of Men. Through a play on the word *malla*, which means "wrestler," Krishna wrestling Chanura is used to represent Krishna's conquest of Nandivarman, "The Pallava Wrestler," which is the meaning of his personal name Pallavamalla. A Sanskrit poem written during Pallavamalla's reign celebrates him as "a born emperor, who is handsome, who is a master both in the art of gymnastics and in the virtue of modesty" (*SII* 2: 357–357, stanza 30). He may have been a "born emperor," but his imperial identity emerged only after Krishna slew a misperception about kingship he received when he was consecrated to rule Kanchipuram around 731. Chanura is not merely a wrestler but also King Kamsa's companion, and before they wrestle he voiced this misperception when he challenged Krishna: "Subjects who please royalty by mind, act, and word acquire majesty and wealth (*shri*); those who do not reap the opposite . . . the king is made of all beings." Chanura was not wrong about the way the king is made, of course, because the ceremony for engendering a king



FIGURE 6.12. Panel 12 B–1: Krishna wrestles Chanura. Photo by Sathya Seelan.



FIGURE 6.13. Panel 12 B–2: Kamsa, seated above the wrestlers, is alarmed. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

(*rajasuya*) does construct him from "all beings." A realm is like a wheel (*chakra*): a wheel moves because of its pivot, a realm flourishes because of its king. But when Kamsa is the king this idea of kingship turns into despotism. In contrast, the Bhagavata understanding of kingship subordinates the king's pleasure to God's pleasure. Subjects are first of all to please God by thought, word, and deed, not the king; and a Bhagavata king is likewise to derive pleasure from God's pleasure. The northern path for Pallavamala culminates in Krishna eliminating Chanura's notion of kingship from his rule as Nandivarman. Ruling exclusively for the sake of Vasudeva Krishna, his rule is a virya rule.

Scene C: Krishna Stands as Victorious Madhava

THE PANEL, SCENE C. In this final scene Krishna appears formally clothed, crowned, and standing stiffly with one pair of arms (Figure 6.14). He rests his right hand on his hip, and raises his left hand at his side to form a mudra difficult to read, but appears to point toward the depiction of Krishna wrestling to his left.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This depiction is of the victorious Madhava, the embodiment of the virya of the Pre-eminently Mighty formation. Krishna



FIGURE 6.14. Panel 12 C: Krishna stands as victorious Madhava. Photo by Hudson, 1993.

embodies virya, which besides manliness, heroism, and sexual potency denotes the Pre-eminently Mighty's ability to act without being affected by his action; he "owns" the passion (*rajas*) he emanates. Krishna as Madhava will leap up to Kamsa's gallery, grab his hair, and pull him down to his death.[8]

Madhu denotes a sweet substance, a sweet intoxicating drink, spring, the first month of the year, Chaitra, and the Vrishni lineage; *madhava* denotes the second month, Vaishakha, and the Yadavas. Chaitra and Vaishakha constitute spring (*vasanta*), but due to the precession of the equinoxes they fell about three weeks closer to the vernal equinox in the eighth century than they do now. Vasanta and the dual madhu-madhava help prepare the unction of Goddess Rama in *BP* 8.8.11.

Significantly, Madhava's body is long: His feet are at a lower level than those of the wrestlers, and his crown rises above their piled hair. On one hand, this illustrates the Tamil epithet of the Bhagavan as Netiyon, "the long one," or as Netumal, "the tall Vishnu." On the other hand, it reveals a three-dimensional perspective to the panel. Of the three scenes, the feet of Krishna and Balarama in Akrura's chariot are the highest above the panel's bottom, for they are farthest from the viewer. The feet of Krishna and Chanura are lower, for they are nearer the viewer. And the feet of Madhava are the lowest, for he stands nearest the viewer. Madhava Krishna thus ends the northern path as an icon to be worshiped.

7

Northern Panels of the Northern Path

Transforming Power

When the poet Kalikanri refers to this side of the sanctum in his poem about the temple, he captures the entire wall by recording its first and last panels. The rescue of the elephant Gajendra begins the sequence, and Krishna dancing on the snake Kaliya ends it: "The elephant's arm is a hollow tube / And his leg is thick and sturdy, / But it hurt badly until / He cured it, He who / Plunged one day into / A pool of blooming flowers / To scare the snake in its water, / He whose place is beautiful Kacci / Encircled by cooling ponds, // There in the Emperor's Vishnu-house / Built by the Sovereign of Pallavas / after the day he marched / at the head of battle / with Cobra in hand / to astonish the Southern King / of fragrant groves / and rampart walls high as mountains" (*PT* 2.9.5).

The first panel, depicting Gajendra's rescue, signifies the devotee seeking refuge from the ignorance that permeates the gross physical body. The last panel, depicting Krishna dancing on the head of the snake Kaliya, signifies the elimination of that ignorance at the deepest and most subtle level of the devotee's consciousness. In the second half of the stanza, Kalikanri correlates these first and last panels (and therefore all six) with Nandivarman's victory over forces the Pandya king supported. By now Nandivarman was a Bhagavata sadhaka and gained victory once he took possession of the portion of the Kaveri River delta named after the naga species known as pampu or cobra; it includes the major harbor for international trade called "Naga's Port City" (Nagapattinam).[1] His possession of this region was the basis for his political status as emperor until his death in 796.

The six panels facing north in the middle-floor sanctum document the different stages of purification of consciousness within the devotee during the predawn "Brahma's hour." Purification begins at the northwest corner, where the final hour of night begins; it ends at the northeast corner, where the sun rises. This purification process is an "awakening" that answers the profound questions, "Who am I?" "Who are you?" The answer begins with the gross physical body, "I am who I see in a mirror"; but this body of flesh and blood is merely a garment, which is worn and then discarded, to be burned or buried (*BG* 2.22). The person wearing this garment is hidden from view. How do we know about it? An authoritative answer is provided by the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, whose "Brahmavalli" section takes us into the hidden dimensions of a person as far as reason can go.

The Person of Four Bodies

According to the Brahmavalli section of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, every person is made up of five layers of matter. As discussed in chapter 2, these layers move from the matter's densest form as flesh and bone on the outside, to its form as fine as space—akasha—inside, and this finest form envelops the essential self or atman. The atman is not matter or prakriti, but pure consciousness or chitta; like a flame it provides the light of consciousness for the material layers enveloping it. Since these layers are made of matter, they are in constant motion and mingle with each other; yet as sheaths or koshas they retain their own distinct identity. Moreover, each sheath is a conscious person or purusha (*TU* 2.1–6). The relationship between these five sheathlike layers is complex, for each has the same shape, each envelops the sheath composed of matter less dense than it, and each permeates the sheath by which it is enveloped (see Figure 2.2 above).

King Ajatashatru of Kashi teaches about these sheathlike persons in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (*BU* 2.1.16–20). This teaching is developed further by the story of the Master of Progeny, Prajapati, as the guru of Indra (king of devas) and of Virochana (king of asuras). This story, which appears in the *Chandogya Upanishad* (*CU* 8.6–12), divides the person into three bodies made of matter, plus one body made of conscious perception.

First, the gross body or sthula sharira made of matter is composed of sheath 1, the person visible in the mirror. Waking consciousness or jagrat uses this gross material body to apprehend the world and itself through the six sense-actions of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. In the story of Prajapati as guru, his asura disciple Virochana concludes that this body is the means to win both this world and the next, and ends his study with it. The story mocks this asura view (*CU* 8.4–5). Yet, at the end of his "Summary of

the *Brahman* Doctrine" in the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna tells Uddhava, "This is the intelligent judgment of the wise and prudent, that One reaches Me, the True One, the Immortal One, by means of a false mortal [body] here [in this world]" (*BP* 11.29.22). Moreover, Virochana's asura view appears to resemble a doctrine acclaimed by his father Prahlada in a story we shall turn to shortly.

Second, Indra continues his study with Prajapati and learns that the physical body invisible to the senses, sukshma sharira, comprises sheaths 2–4, the person made of life-breath (*pranamaya*), the person made of mind or mental activity (*manasmaya*), and the person made of discriminative or subject-object knowledge (*vijnanamaya*). During sleep this invisible body resides in the heart's space or hridaya akasha, where it produces dreaming or svapna.

Third, deep dreamless sleep (*shushupta*) comprises sheath 5 and resides in the pericardium of the heart. This body contains the seeds of karma, and they produce the body comprising sheaths 2–4. It is therefore known as the causal dimension of the invisible body (*karana-sukshma-sharira*). It is also known as the jiva. The jiva in samsara is dominated by time (*BP* 11.28.16).

The nonmaterial atman is the fourth body or turiya. This is the highest person, the seeing person, the one who is aware, and the one who resides inside the heart. The Master of Progeny calls the heart the "fort of *brahman*" (*brahmapura*). Inside this fort is a lotus, and this seeing person dwells in its tiny space, where the entire universe exists (*CU* 8.1–4). The *Kena Upanishad* discusses the mystery of this fort of *brahman*. The *Narayana Upanishad* (5) identifies its lotus as Vaikuntha (experienced as a flash of lightning in the mind). The *Mandukya Upanishad* uses the mantra *Om* to describe it. And the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* (1) describes the journey to it at death. Krishna teaches Uddhava about this turiya or fourth person, and identifies himself with it (*BP* 11.13.25–29; 11.24). But beyond it is Narayana; He is "beyond the fourth" (*turyatita*), a fifth body that is incomprehensible (*Hamsha Upanishad* 9; Deussen 1980: 2: 720).

Purification on the North

Let us now use these complex understandings of the person to interpret the six panels on the sanctum's northern side. As we recall, they face the realm of humans during the last hour of night, and signify the Krita Yuga. The sequence begins at the northwest corner with Panel 5. The first three panels (5–7) represent the activity of the Plower formation's bala or power; the second three panels (8–10) represent the activity of His jnana or knowledge. These panels are further examples of visual "texts" encoding several meanings in a single depiction. In all these panels, for example, a specific body of water is used to represent the devotee's consciousness (*chitta*) in the devotee's five sheathlike layers.

Panel 5: Hari Rescues Gajendra

The Story. The story of Gajendra takes place in the fourth Manu Term and begins with the Pandya king of Dravidas named Indradyumna (Indra's Strength). He is named after Indra's elephant Airavata.[2] Indradyumna is devoted to the vows of Vishnu and worships Hari. He goes to the Malaya mountains to live in the Kulachala ashram as an ascetic with matted hair and observes a vow to worship Hari in silence. One day the sage Agastya arrives with his disciples. Indradyumna does not break his vow in order to receive the great sage hospitably, which angers Agastya. He curses the Pandyan to become an elephant, an animal whose ignorance he thinks matches Indradyumna's. When the royal seer dies, therefore, he is reborn as an elephant, but an unusual one because he retains a memory of Hari.

Indradyumna is now an elephant like Indra's Airavata, and is known as Indra of Elephants or Gajendra. He lives with a herd of females on the island in the Ocean of Milk that contains the mountain called Three Peaks (Trikuta). Measured in the distance traversed by an oxcart in one day (*yojana*), the mountain is ten thousand yojanas high and ten thousand yojanas wide. It has peaks of silver, of iron, and of gold—one of each, associated with devas Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Its shore, washed by the Ocean of Milk, shines with green emeralds, and its many caves are playgrounds for celestial beings of all sorts. Animals, birds, trees, and flowers flourish in perfume wafting from the bodies of devis bathing in its many lakes (*BP* 8.2; 8.4.18). In one valley of the mountain there is a garden named Ritumat (In Season). *Ritumat* denotes the period of a woman's monthly cycle favorable for conception.[3] This garden belongs to Varuna of the west, and devis play among its luxurious and fruitful trees. It contains a large and splendid lake with golden lotuses, blue water lilies, and birds of all shapes and colors.

One day Gajendra is in rut and hot from the sun. He leads his females out of the forest into the lake to drink and playfully sprays them with his trunk. He is absorbed in this pleasure of the pond when an infuriated "grasper" (*graha*) grabs his back leg. The two tug each other violently with little success for a thousand years. Gajendra is weakened by the effort, and his fellow elephants cannot help. He knows his end is near. Out of distress he mentally repeats the supreme prayer (*parama japya*) he remembered from his previous life as the Pandyan king. In his heart Gajendra seeks refuge in Hari. But in his prayer he does not ask to be rescued from the "grasper" so that he can continue his householder pleasures. He asks instead to be rescued from the ignorance that Time alone cannot remove (*BP* 8.3.1–29). He takes refuge in the Bhagavan, because as the source of his problem he is its solution; the lord of the sense of "This am I" is the Plower.[4]

Hari seated on Garuda (who is made of Vedic mantras) immediately appears, his wheel flashing as devas sing his praise. Gajendra sees Hari, holds a lotus with his trunk as if for an offering, and with great difficulty says,

"I venerate Narayana, the guru of all, the Bhagavan." In an instant Hari dismounts from Garuda, pulls both grasper and elephant out of the water, slices open the grasper's jaws with his wheel, and frees the elephant. Devas, seers, gandharvas, Brahma, and Shiva rain down flowers. The gandharvas sing and dance, and seers, charanas, and siddhas praise the Supreme Person.

Instantly, the grasper turns into the foremost gandharva, named Huhu; the seer Devala had cursed him long ago, but now he is free from sin. Huhu praises Hari, circumambulates him, prostrates at his feet, and leaves for the gandharva realm near Mount Meru.[5] Hari touches Gajendra, and he is instantly freed from ignorance and given a body with four arms and a yellow garment resembling Hari's own (*BP* 8.4.6). Hari takes him away to his own residence (*BP* 8.4.13). Gajendra resides there in the emancipated condition known as "having the same form" (*sarupya*) as Hari. Hari also makes this promise in the hearing of all (which I have edited for clarification):

Whoever arises as night ends in the west, intently
devoted and truly absorbed,/
certainly shall be freed if he recollects these My shapes://
[*Gajendra and White Island in the Ocean of Milk*]
Me and you, the waters of this pond, the mountain
and its caves,/
the groves of the devas' trees;//
The abodes on mountain peaks belonging to Brahma,
to Me, and to Shiva,/
My beloved Ocean of Milk, and White Island My
luminous home;//
[*Hari's Material Form*]
Shrivatsa, Kaustubha, the garland, My mace
Kaumodaki,/
the wheel Sudarshana, the conch Panchajanya,
Garuda the ruler of birds;//
And Shesha My secret part, Goddess Shri
inseparable from Me,/
Brahmins, the rishi Narada, Bhava, and Prahlada too;//
[*Hari's Deeds*]
My deeds as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, and other avataras,/
the infinitely pure actions of Surya the Sun, Soma
the Moon, Fire the eater of oblations;//
[*The Foundation of the Universe*]
The pranava Om, True Being, the Unmanifest,
inspired singers of mantras, imperishable dharma,/
Daksha's daughters who are wives of Dharma,
Soma, and Kashyapa;//

> [*The Realm of Heaven*]
> Ganga, Sarasvati, Nanda, Kalindi, the
> White Elephant Airavata,/
> Dhruva the pole star, the Brahma rishis, and the
> renowned Seven,/
> the descendents of Manu.// . . .
> Those who awaken and while night falls way
> sing of Me as illustrated here,/
> To them, when life nears its end, I will give
> undefiled understanding.// (BP 4.17–25)

Thus Hari promises that those who rise before sunrise during Brahma's hour, bathe and pray, and in their prayers remind themselves of this and other episodes, will be freed from all sins and will remember Hari at the time of their death. They will escape Yama's purgatorial realm and go directly to him in Vaikuntha, as depicted below on the bottom floor in this same northwest corner (Panel N1).

THE PANEL. Figure 7.1 views the panel from above. It depicts the instant when Hari appears in response to Gajendra's mental act of seeking in Narayana refuge from ignorance. The panel is rich in information, and we shall discuss it by dividing the depiction horizontally into two overlapping parts. In the part above, the crowned Hari, dressed royally and with two pairs of hands, sits on the shoulders of Garuda. He gazes directly northward toward the viewer as his head tilts slightly westward. Hari's back left hand holds the base of the conch, and his back right hand holds the base of what may be a prayogachakra: the rim of the wheel faces the viewer as if about to be thrown. Hari raises his front right hand diagonally eastward and forms what may be the nyasamudra: the hand is open, but the middle finger bends downward to the palm (*PS* 1974: 71). He rests his front left hand on his thigh and forms the dhyanamudra: the hand bends down toward the viewer, the thumb extends sideways, and the fingers curl inward (*PS* 1974: 103).

Two male figures wearing crowns fly in mirrored postures at the top of the panel, and mark the panel's central axis with their upraised arms. Remains of what may have been halos appear behind the heads of both figures (most notably in the figure on the east). They appear to signify Surya the Sun moving from the east and Soma the Moon moving to the west as night's final hour begins.

In the lower part of the panel, the kite bird Garuda has the shape of a man but the beak of a bird (Figure 7.2). He gazes slightly downward as he flies, his right leg bending upward at the knee toward the east as his left leg stretches down to the west. Directly beneath his right foot at the bottom center of the panel stands the small figure of the elephant Gajendra (this bottom scene



FIGURE 7.1. Panel 5: Hari rescues Gajendra. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

depicts what Hari sees). Gajendra stands oriented eastward and bends the tip of his trunk toward his mouth, perhaps holding a freshly plucked lotus blossom. A female companion facing east stands behind him. In contrast to her, however, Gajendra turns his head northward, looking at Hari as depicted above. The grasper, who is portrayed as the crocodile-like water beast called makara, emerges from the lower northwest corner and has Gajendra's back left leg in his mouth.



FIGURE 7.2. Detail of Panel 5: Gajendra beneath Garuda. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

A female stands at the base of the panel east of Gajendra and faces north, her head at the level of Garuda's right knee. She rests her right hand on her hip, but raises her left hand in what may be the abhayamudra of protection. Her identity is uncertain, but she may depict the pond Ritumat as a woman during her ritu period. A larger male stands on the western side of the panel above the grasping makara, his head with a tall crown reaching to Hari's left elbow. His western location and proximity to the makara identifies him as Varuna, who dwells in the west as emperor of asuras noted for their grasping,

lustful nature. He stands in veneration as owner of the garden and lake, and as ruler of night during which householders fulfill their ritumat duty.

The Panel's Meanings. The Ritumat lake is the first body of water we shall encounter in these north-facing panels. It denotes consciousness in the sheath of the body made of gross matter or "food" (*annamayakosha*). During the darkness of night erotic desire (*kama*) propels husband and wife to conception, and in doing so entangles them in repeated death and birth. This is all the Plower's doing, for this formation creates ignorance and destroys it (*BP* 4.24–35; 8.3.18 and 29). Consequently, when Gajendra took refuge in "the embodiment of jnana," he asked that this first of Vasudeva's formations reverse its function as obscurer and destroy the sense of "I" that was obscuring the knowledge of his true Self.

The details of the narrative match the panel's location at the northwest corner, for the mountain called Three Peaks is on an island northwest of Bharata. It lies in the Ocean of Milk; it will be known as White Island (Shvetadvipa) after the Bhagavan takes up residence there in the next Manu Term, the fifth.[6] He will create the Vaikuntha realm on earth and will be born there along with Vaikuntha devas with the name Vaikuntha (*BP* 8.5.4–6). The *Bhagavata Purana*, however, assumes its location is known and does not specify it.

The story of Gajendra's emancipation (*gajendramoksha*) represents the first step in the devotee's purification. It is the plea to be rescued from the grasp of ignorance at the base of carnal desire. The devotee makes this plea when taking refuge in an acharya. There the refugee learns the rites and prayers of recitation (*sankirtana*), notably "Vishnu's Thousand Names" (*vishnusahasranama*), which Bhishma teaches in the *Mahabharata*. The later acharya Parasara Bhattar taught that all people, including Shudras, women, and those of the "impure" castes may, at any time, utter (*japa*) these thousand names in recitation (*sankirtana*). If they do so with a pure mind, their japa will lead eventually to emancipation (*moksha*) (Bhattar 1983: 50–65).

Thus this panel signifies Hari's response to the act of taking refuge (*prapatti*) at the beginning of night's final hour. Hari's two mudras (if they are correctly identified) signify the rites of this act. By means of nyasa (Hari's right-hand mudra), the devotee purifies his body with mantras. Then by means of dhyana (Hari's left-hand mudra), he visualizes the Bhagavan and approaches Him as a refugee (*prapanna*).

The panel uses Gajendra to represent the householder's consciousness newly awakened in his gross body and dominated by the consciousness of "This I am" (*ahamkara*). His ego is in the grip of sexual desire or kama, a necessary desire, because it enables householders to continue family lineages by means of copulation or samslesha, which is a householder's dharma. Yet kama can lead the soul to endless death and birth.

But Gajendra also identifies this devotee as a Dravida king: a) the elephant as a royal emblem signifies the king's authority and power, and his realm's prosperous fertility; b) the elephant is a symbol of the ego as ignorant and lustful, resembling a rutting elephant capable of great violence (for example, Kamsa's elephant Kuvalayapida); and c) this elephant's previous life as the Pandya king Indradyumna, famous in Dravida as Hari's devotee, points to Nandivarman, likewise famous in Dravida as Hari's devotee.

The story illustrated by the panel thus exemplifies Hari's gracious response to the rite of seeking refuge, sharana, when it is performed with the true intent and complete attention generated by deeply felt anxiety (*bhaya*). Like Gajendra, the royal devotee faces the limit of self-reliance, relies instead on the Bhagavan, and uses a rite he already knows how to perform. Hari responds with bala, the power produced by jnana to slaughter one aspect of the devotee (the grasping kama resident in his gross body) in order to transform another aspect (the consciousness of "This I am").

Gajendra's transformation into a small replica of Hari illustrates the transformed ego's new sense of self: "Who am I? I am Hari, for I now have his shape. If I look in a mirror I see him. Yet Hari and I are not completely the same, because I and others like me dwell with him in Vaikuntha." This mode of emancipation (*mukti*) is described as "dwelling in the same world" (*salokya*) and "having the same shape" (*sarupya*), and is the gift of jnana's transforming bala.

Finally, this act of taking refuge at the end of each night of a Bhagavata's life repeats the act he performed at the feet of his acharya, when he sought to become the protected property of the Bhagavan through consecration or diksha. Every subsequent rite of seeking refuge or sharanagati implies his acharya, and he appears in the next panel as Rama.

Panel 6: Rama Disciplines Ocean on the Way to Lanka

Kalikanri selected this panel as the subject of his poem's eighth stanza: "Once a King of vigor / With the Umbrella of a hero / And an army of monkeys / Blocked the sea with mountains—/ He is my Father the Lord / Whose place in beautiful Kacci / Ringed by ornate halls // Is the Emperor's Vishnu-house / Served by the Sovereign of Pallavas / who seized the Spear of War / in his right hand / and with the power of an army / frightened in Nenmeli / the virile Villavan bull, / the Cheran who owns the Bow" (*PT* 2.9.8). The Chera king bears the title "Owner of the Bow" (*villavan*) and appears in the second stanza of this same poem. The ancient Chera capital was Karuvur, modern-day Karur in Tiruchinappalli District, on a river that flows into the Kaveri River (Nagaswamy 1995: 107–112). The bow (*vil*) was the Chera dynastic emblem. Kalikanri's use of the Rama story in the first half of this stanza implies that

the Cheran of the second half was analogous to the rakshasa Ravana ruling the island Lanka to the south.

THE STORY. According to the *Bhagavata Purana*'s telling of the Rama story (*BP* 9.10–11), Rama, Lakshmana, and the army of monkeys reach the sea on their southward journey to retrieve Sita from Ravana. The sea roars wildly in protest, but when Rama glares at it angrily the ocean (*sindhu*) takes form and appears with gifts to seek shelter at his feet. The ocean as person confesses that Rama is the Person controlling the universe. "You are free to cross the sea to conquer Ravana," he says. "Build a bridge that will spread your fame and kings will come to see it when they perform the ceremony of conquering the four directions (*digvijaya*)." And so they do. Ravana's youngest brother, Vibhishana, leads Rama, Lakshmana, and the monkey army to Lanka (*BP* 9.10.12–16). After he kills Ravana and retrieves Sita, Rama installs Vibhishana as Lanka's king with a life span that will last until the end of this kalpa. Rama returns to Ayodhya in the north and receives the unction of kingship in the manner of Indra's abhisheka (*BP* 10.10.49–51).

Valmiki in his *Ramayana* tells this episode in greater detail. He begins it with Vibhishana just after he flees from his elder brother, Ravana, to take refuge with Rama across the sea (*Ram* 6.19–22). At Rama's command and in the presence of the foremost monkeys, Lakshmana uses ocean water to consecrate him king of rakshasas in place of Ravana. As Lanka's new ruler, Vibhishana advises Rama that the best way to cross Varuna's watery abode is to approach Ocean (*sagara*) directly. Since Rama's own ancestor, Sagara, dug out the sea and his descendent Bhagiratha filled it up, Ocean is Sagara's creation; he will surely help him throw an embankment across himself to Lanka. Rama agrees. Just as fire ascends an altar, Rama proceeds with Lakshmana and the monkeys to the shore where a grass called kusha or darbha grows.[7]

Kusha grass is an important purifier in Vedic ritual, and Rama spreads it on the shore to begin a rite of forbearance (*kshama*). He joins his palms to venerate Ocean and resolves, "I shall cross Ocean or I shall die," and lies down on the grass near the sea. He faces east and uses his right upper arm as a pillow (*Ram* 6.21.1–9); this means his head is south and his feet are north. Lakshmana stands guard. Three nights roll by as Rama silently waits for Ocean to appear, but he waits in vain. By now Rama is furious and threatens to dry up the makaras' abode, because Ocean construes his forbearance as weakness. He tells Lakshmana to bring him his bow and arrows so he may attack Varuna's abode for Danu's many asura sons (*danavas*). The monkeys shall cross on dry land.

With bow in hand and eyes wide in anger, Rama is as terrifying as the fire that will burn up this kalpa. He shoots his arrows at Varuna's abode and it heaves wildly, a mass of clashing waves tossing out terrified animals, asuras, and nagas. Lakshmana immediately runs to his elder brother, takes hold of his

bow, and urges him to stop, because men like him do not act out of anger. He urges Rama to find another way to cross the sea, and brahma-seers and deva-seers invisible in the sky above cry out their agreement.

Nevertheless, Rama continues his threat to dry up Ocean down to the depth of Patala. He takes one arrow and infuses it with an "arrow" of Brahma, which means a mantra.[8] It is now Brahma's rod (*brahmadanda*). He fixes it to his bow, pulls the bowstring, and bends the bow to its limit. Rama's powerful pull darkens the world in chaos, and Ocean floods his boundaries for miles around, but Rama does not move. Ocean clad in red, gold, and jewels finally emerges from his own waves in the company of fiery-mouthed serpents and rivers led by Ganga and Sindhu. As his waves throw huge makaras, serpents, and rakshasas in confusion, Ocean joins his palms to venerate Rama. He pleads that as one of matter's five elements he cannot solidify his watery expanse, but he can keep graspers (*graha*) at bay and provide the monkeys a foothold.

Rama has achieved his goal without shooting his powerful brahmadanda, but it is activated and he must shoot it somewhere. Ocean suggests he send it north to the region of Drumakulya, where sinners led by Abhiras drink his waters, something Ocean finds intolerable. Rama shoots Brahma's rod northward, and it falls in a region that comes to be known as Desert Wilderness (*marukantara*), corresponding approximately to Marwar and Bikaner in contemporary Rajasthan. The arrow dries up the region's waters, but leaves a well called Vrana filled by Rasatala's brackish waters from beneath the earth.[9]

Ocean advises Rama to have Nala build a bridge to span him and then disappears. Nala, the monkey son of the deva architect named Maker of All (Vishvakarman), says that Ocean is allowing Rama to cross him out of fear, not because he wants to see a bridge built. But he is quite capable of bridging Varuna's abode, he says, so Rama appoints him the leader of the other monkeys. In five days they build a bridge ten yojanas wide and one hundred yojanas long. Vibhishana guards the southern shore as Rama and Lakshmana cross with the monkeys to Lanka, whereupon devas suddenly appear with siddhas, charanas, and great seers to consecrate Rama with highly auspicious water.[10] They urge him now to conquer his enemies and rule earth and sea for years without number (*Ram* 6.22.88–89).

The seer Markandeya also tells the Rama story in the *Mahabharata* (*Mbh* 3.261–276; van Buitenen 2.731–760). He begins this episode with Rama speaking on the ocean shore (in van Buitenen's translation, 2.746): "I shall attack the ocean with a ruse and press it back; and the One who dwells underneath will show himself to me. And if he does not show a way, I shall set it afire with mighty and irresistible missiles that blaze fiercely with fire and wind." Ocean then appears in a dream and gives in to Rama's threat to dry him up with enchanted arrows. He advises Rama to have Nala make a causeway in the ocean with wood, straw, and rock. Nala's Bridge is ten leagues wide, a hundred long, and it still exists, Markandeya says, tall as a mountain.

Vibhishana and four councilors later meet Rama at the bridge, having crossed the ocean, it appears, on the causeway. Once Rama is sure of Vibhishana's loyalty, he consecrates him king of all rakshasas and appoints him Lakshmana's counselor. Vishishana tells Rama how to cross his army over the causeway in the space of a month. Rama kills the ten-headed Ravana and gives Lanka to Vibhishana (van Buitenen 2.747, 756).

Another telling of this episode appears in Pravarasena's fifth-century Prakrit narrative "Constructing the Bridge" (*Setubandha*). It describes the bridge building in elaborate detail and was probably well known in eighth-century Kanchipuram.[11] In this telling, however, the one who advises Rama to subdue Ocean with his bow is Brahma's monkey or ape son, Jambavat, whose daughter Jambavati will later be the mother of Krishna's son Samba. "The sea fills only a part of your belly, it is amazing that it perplexes you," Jambavat says to Rama (4.39).[12] Shortly thereafter Vibhishana flies over from Lanka, takes refuge in Rama, and Rama anoints him (4.51–65). The next morning, when Rama sees that Ocean has not given in, his wrath swells, his face glares as he knits his brows and his knotted hair falls loose. Rama, otherwise so gentle, assumes a ferocity like the sun at the kalpa's end as he looks to his bow. After a long silence he picks it up and speaks this dire resolve: "Let the earth be split, let the sea perish, let the world vanish!" (5.16–17, 20; modified). Rama shoots his fiery arrows into the sea and it boils ferociously, but then Ocean appears and falls at Rama's feet along with Ganga, his consort (6.7–8). He agrees to have a causeway (*setu*) built, but the monkeys are successful only when Nala guides them (8.18–27). Their formidably massive causeway stretches into the sea and divides it into two, as if Death were reaching out to destroy Ravana and his kin (8.88).

THE PANEL. This panel captures Rama's anger addressed to Ocean, in whose place the viewer stands (Figure 7.3). Rama stands on the east and the smaller Lakshmana stands to the west, with a Brahma rishi sitting above him on an open lotus blossom. Each figure has one pair of arms. Rama is dressed royally and stands in a posture of stern countenance. He holds the middle of his bow with his right hand; his left arm is broken off, but its hand at the panel's visual center forms the fist of the balimudra or mushtimudra: the thumb folds over the fingers curled into the palm (*PS* 1974: 46, 107). Lakshmana's left hand rests on his hip, and his right hand forms what may be the ankushamudra. This is the mudra of the pointed prod (*ankusha*) used by a mahout to guide his elephant: the forefinger and thumb curl to form the shape of a hook, the remaining fingers curl toward the palm (*PS* 1974: 41). The mudra formed by the seer sitting above Lakshmana is too badly damaged to decipher.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel signifies the Bhagavan's transforming bala as it acts upon the refugee (*prapanna*). Rama's angry glare points to the



FIGURE 7.3. Panel 6: Rama disciplines Ocean on the way to Lanka. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

acharya's discipline of the refugee's ocean of consciousness after the monkey mind is brought under control. The roaring ocean full of grasping serpents, rakshasas, and asuras represents the refugee's ego-centered mental activity raging against the calm submission demanded by the acharya. Rama's anger and its threat of the ultimate weapon denote the Plower's power (*bala*) acting on the sadhaka through the acharya. The badly damaged mudra formed Rama's left at the panel's center must signify this meaning.

A second layer of meaning points to the bala acting through the acharya to discipline the sheath of made of breath (*pranamayakosha*) in the gross body of the refugee. By disciplining consciousness in this body of breath, bala affects consciousness in the remaining three bodies. In addition, the raging Ocean resisting Rama is the refugee's mind resisting the acharya's required discipline of his breath through pranayama; typically this is systematic extension and calming of irregular breathing. But to perform this breath control the refugee must first unify his gross body by sitting in a disciplined posture called asana.

We also see that the monkeys in this episode (not depicted but implied) represent the devotee's thinking brought into focus by this pranayama. Normal breathing allows for normal thinking, which, like wild monkeys, is uncontrolled, affectionate, familial, violent, and sexually promiscuous. But these are focused monkeys of the mind, and they embank the already pacified mental ocean, building a levee stretching from the shore to Lanka.

Still another meaning of this levee, the setu, lies in its connection to Vibhishana. Vibhishana in this context denotes the future of Nandivarman as the royal sadhaka. Just as the righteous demon Vibhishana will rule Lanka under the imperial authority of the enthroned Rama, so the impure yet purified Nandivarman will rule under the authority of his enthroned acharya, as depicted on the prakara wall discussed in chapter 4. The setu over which Vibhishana guides Rama's monkeys represents the means to this future. Even in Markandeya's telling, where Vibhishana takes refuge after Nala has already built the bridge, the rakshasa crosses it from Lanka to seek refuge in Rama, and then leads Rama's forces over it back to Lanka. In Pravarasena's telling, the setu stretches north from the Malaya mountain south to Lanka's Suvela mountain, and the monkeys march across it on their own (*BP* 8.99–100). Vibhishana's troops then lead Rama's army from the Suvela mountain into Lanka, because they know the way and the rakshasas' resources, and are skilled in both deceitful and legitimate methods of war (*Setubandhu* 12.34).

The implied setu—the bridge, embankment, or causeway the monkeys will build—signifies the acharya's discipline of the resident refugee. The setu is the techniques and disciplines the sadhaka learns in order to calm waking consciousness in the gross body by bringing mind-suffused breath under control. One characteristic method is to "stretch the breath out" (*prana-ayama*). Markandeya gives this meaning of *setu* in another *Mahabharata* teaching (*Mbh* 3.203.35–40). An impure hunter once told the pure Brahmin Kausika that

"Greed and anger must be tamed by any means; this is the purifying agent of sacrifice, and this self-mortification is regarded as the bridge.[13] Nala's Bridge denotes taming greed and anger under the acharya's discipline.

Life with the acharya is not easy, because the candidate is generally "dammed up" and "bounded." Even before the Vibhava-diksha, which the next panel represents, candidates who are non-Brahmins or especially sinful Brahmins must undergo the cleansing Man-lion Consecration. Once that is over, they must develop skill in rites such as repeating mantras (*japa*), offering oblations (*homa*), and fulfilling vowed disciplines (*vrata*) directed to a selected secondary emanation (*vibhava*) of God. This may take twelve days or eight months, depending on the caste of the candidate and the degree of sinfulness, which the discerning acharya can determine merely by looking at him or her. For twelve days prior to the consecration the refugee fasts, sings praises, collects materials needed for rites, cuts nails and hair, and recites the Vasudeva-mantra four hundred times for four days. And immediately prior to the ceremony the candidate is to bathe four times within twelve hours (*SS* 16.1–41; Smith 1975: 526).

Also, importantly, Rama's anger depicted in the panel is an example of the way the sadhaka is not to behave. Hanuman says in the *Bhagavata Purana* that Vasudeva becomes Rama not only to destroy the rakshasas but also to teach people how to behave (*BP* 5.19.5). At the ocean, Lakshmana and the seers make it clear that Rama's angry threat is not appropriate to righteous people. The sadhaka is to imitate Ocean's final acquiescence, not Rama's threatening anger; it is appropriate only to an acharya when dealing with an "ungrateful" disciple.

Another meaning we can find in this panel comes from the fact that Rama uses this monkey-built levee to cross to Lanka; this is bala crossing by means of disciplined thought into the pacified sheath of mental activity (*manomaya-kosha*). We also note that Rama slays Ravana in Lanka; this is bala eradicating from mental activity its demonic claim: "This is mine, and I shall take whatever I want." Finally, Rama then authorizes Vibhishana's rule of Lanka for the rest of Brahma's daytime; this is bala's subjection of demonic wisdom and devotion in the devotee's mind to the continuing authority of his acharya, who is represented by Rama anointed as king in Ayodhya.

This panel alludes to two others nearby. First, the ocean as Rama's kinsman evokes the stories of the seer Kapila and the descent of Ganga River to fill up the sea after Agastya drank it dry (*BP* 9.8 and 9.9.1–15). Kapila refers to the acharya teaching the samkhya and yoga of bhakti (*BP* 3.25.32–44); a panel on the bottom floor very close in position to this one foretells Kapila's birth (Panel N3). Second, the descent of the Ganga River alludes to the waters used in the acharya's unction in preparation for the rites he performs for the sadhaka. These unction waters appear twice in Valmiki's telling: in Rama's consecration after he crosses to Lanka, and in his consecration as emperor in Ayodhya after

he slays Ravana and returns with Sita. The waters used in the sadhaka's unction appear as the ocean water used to install Vibhishana as Lanka's ruler under Rama's authority. The sadhaka's consecration and sadhana appear in the next panel.

Panel 7: Hari as Ajita Churns the Ocean of Milk

THE STORY. The story this panel represents is the first of three episodes in a famous narrative about the Bhagavan and kingship. This Vishnu-house illustrates all three episodes. The conclusion of the first episode appears here (Panel 7). The crucial event of the second episode appears at the southwest corner on the vimana below (Panel S6). And the conclusion of the third episode appears opposite this panel on the sanctum's southern side (Panel 19).

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, the lengthy narrative of the Churning of the Milk Ocean is told immediately after the story of Gajendra (*BP* 8.5–12). The Gajendra story takes place in the fourth Manu Term. In the fifth Manu Term, a part of the Bhagavan appears on Earth as Vaikuntha, the son of Shubhra and his wife Vikuntha. At the request of Goddess Rama the Charming, he creates his abode known as Vaikuntha on Trikuta or White Island in the ocean northwest of Mount Meru. In the sixth Manu Term, a portion (*amsha*) of the Bhagavan appears as Master of the Moving Universe withh the name Ajita, "The Unconquered." Ajita has appeared in a body of purity (*sattva*) to protect the universe, but requires the presence of his majesty, Goddess Shri the Charming, to complete himself as ruler. But she has not yet appeared. This first episode describes how Ajita uses the devas and asuras to churn the majesty and wealth of Goddess Shri into this sixth Manu Term for his own sake as ruler. It also describes how Ajita churns into manifestation the accoutrements of kingship, which are divided between Indra, Bali, and himself. And it explains that Ajita favors the devas over the asuras, and therefore churns up amrita for their prosperous longevity. But all of this exists only so long as Shiva contains death; when the time is right he will release its poison like a serpent.

To set the stage for this episode, let us examine the ocean to be churned. At the beginning of this kalpa, Shuka tells Parikshit, Goddess Earth spreads out like an open lotus blossom. It rises from the pond of pure water formed by the mountainous boundary between directional space (*loka*) and nondirectional space (*aloka*) called Lokaloka. But Priyavrata, son of Svayambhuva Manu and a grandson of Brahma, circumambulates directional space in a chariot seven times and leaves seven ruts on earth. They fill with different kinds of liquids and form concentric continents with oceans on both sides (*dvipa*) (*BP* 5.1.30–35). The fifth ocean from the center is this one which is churned. It surrounds the continent called Krauncha, which may explain why Krauncha's residents worship the Bhagavan as water; "milk" was added to the water surrounding Krauncha to form the Milk Ocean. Shuka says this "milk" is sap from the

shrubs, grasses, creepers, and medicinal plants that Vishnu tells devas to throw into it.[14]

After Gajendra takes refuge in Hari in the fourth Manu Term, Hari's realm of Vaikuntha enters into Brahma's material body in the fifth Manu Term. Vaikuntha becomes an island "beyond darkness" in earth's ocean northwest of the central mountain Meru. A portion (*amsha*) of the Unobstructed formation is born there as Ajita (Unconquered) (*BP* 8.5.24). In the sixth Manu Term, Ajita turns his portion of the ocean into the Ocean of Milk and churns it to produce the elements of royal rule for devas and asuras subordinate to his authority.

The story begins when Shiva, as the seer Durvasas, curses Indra, and the devas become vulnerable to asura attacks.[15] Indra of the east and Varuna of the west join together and lead devas to Mount Meru seeking Brahma's help. But his help is useless, so Brahma and Bhava (who is Shiva) go with them to Hari's abode beyond darkness in the Ocean and Brahma prays to him. Hari appears in the shape to be worshiped through the yoga of the Vedas and Tantras for the sake of the highest goal: He has a form bright as a thousand rising suns, is emerald blue in complexion, garbed in yellow, and accompanied by weapons in the forms of persons (*BP* 8.6.1–15). Hari could solve the problem himself, of course, but he wants to enjoy himself with the churning of the ocean and what follows it. He therefore advises the devas to make peace with the asuras, for time is now in their favor. Join with them in churning the Ocean to obtain amrita, he says, and wait until time turns in your favor. Agree to whatever terms they propose. Throw shrubs, grasses, creepers, and medicinal plants into the Milk Ocean, use Mandara Mountain to churn, and use the royal snake Vasuki for the rope. With my help, he continues, asuras will do the work and you devas will grab the fruits. Don't be afraid when the poison called kalakuta emerges; don't be greedy for any other objects that will appear; and don't be angry if anyone prevents you from possessing them. The Supreme Hari then disappears, Brahma returns to Mount Meru, Bhava goes to Mount Kailasa, and Indra leads devas to Bali's realm under Earth. Indra persuades Bali to combine forces with him in order to churn the Milk Ocean and obtain amrita. After all, he points out, their father is Kashyapa and they are brothers. (This alliance will lead the Bhagavan to take the form of Vamana the Dwarf to subdue Bali in our seventh Manu Term, as illustrated on this sanctum by Panels 13–15.)

The combined deva and asura forces go to the golden mountain called Mandara (Sluggish), lift it up, and carry it toward the sea. But it is heavy and they drop it, killing and injuring many. Hari appears on Garuda, revives and heals devas (but not asuras), lifts the golden Mandara onto Garuda, mounts the bird, and flies off with it to the sea. Garuda then puts Mandara on the seashore and with Hari's permission flies away. The deva and asura sons of Kashyapa now persuade Vasuki, who rules naga snakes in the dark underworld waters, to act as the churning rope, promising him a share of the amrita. They wind him

around Mandara, Hari takes hold of Vasuki's head, and devas line up with him. The asuras are left with Vasuki's end, which they think is beneath their dignity, so Hari and devas change places with them. They begin pulling Vasuki back and forth to churn the sea, but the heavy Mandara sinks into the waters. Even together devas and asuras can't lift it up.

Hari takes charge once again. He appears as the wondrous Primordial Tortoise (Adikacchapa). The Bhagavan's power of sustaining (*adharashakti*) supports this Primordial Tortoise, who in turn supports Ananta the Snake on whose hood the brahmanda rests. (The Primordial Tortoise appears below in Panel W1). Now, however, Hari becomes this tortoise inside the brahmanda. He rests on the bottom of the Ocean holding Mandara on his back. Hari then pervades the asuras and devas to energize them, anesthetizes Vasuki, and stands beside Mandara, propping it up with one of his thousand hands placed on its top.[16] Brahma and others watch from above and toss flowers on the extraordinary events below.

Now asuras and devas churn wildly, but Vasuki's heavy breaths are hot fumes painful to everyone, so Hari brings a cooling breeze. Still nothing has appeared from the sea. Hari takes over once again and with great vigor pulls Vasuki back and forth with his many arms and now things begin to emerge. The first is kalakuta, "time's trap" or "black deception," a deadly poison produced by the halahala plant, and its deadly fumes spread in all directions.[17]

To get help with this poison, the "masters of progeny" (*prajapati*) who protect life fly to snowy white mount Kailasa, where Shiva dwells as Sadashiva (Ever-auspicious). His emblem is the bull (*vrishanka*),[18] and his companion is the daughter of Daksha (Adroit in Sacrifice), the devi known as Uma, the Mother who becomes everything (*bhavani*). The prajapatis take refuge in Sadashiva sitting with Bhavani and offer him a prayer. It resembles the prayer Gajendra made to Hari and the prayers Brahma offered before and after Hari appeared for worship through Veda and Tantra (*BP* 8.7.21–35). The prajapatis identify Sadashiva as the source of bondage and liberation (the Plower's function). They say he is the origin of the Three Material Forms (*trimurti*) through his transformation of the threads of matter, and is Ruler of the Moving Universe (*jagadishvara*) in whom that matter exists. They describe him as the womb of sound (*shabdayoni*); as the primal atman of the moving universe (*jagatadiratma*); and as the essential nature (*svabhava*) of breath (*prana*), of the sense organs (*indriya*), of their objects (*dravya*), and of their qualities or threads (*guna*). He is time (*kala*), will (*kratu*), truth (*satya*), order (*rita*), righteousness (*dharma*), and the basis of the threefold syllable Om (*aum*). And his body and Brahma's body correspond (*BP* 8.7.22–28).

Their prayer takes a different course, however, when they introduce a liturgy for the Linga of Five Faces (*panchamukhalinga*), which must have been performed in the temples Pallavas built for Shiva in the seventh and eighth centuries:[19]

> That which is called Shiva is the absolute supreme principle which is its own light. It has five faces in the form of five secrets (*upanishad*), and thirty-eight mantras. His shadow is disorder (*adharma*); his three eyes are purity, passion, and darkness in the re-emanation of the universe (*visarga*); and his glance is the texts composed of meters. The Supreme Light is *brahman* without division, beyond purity, passion, and darkness, and is not accessible to the world guardians, to Brahma, to Vaikuntha, and to Indra and the others.
>
> The Ever-auspicious is indifferent to the universe he makes when, at the end of time, he burns it through the fire of his third eye. That indifference matches his indifference when he burns Kama, the deva of desire, when he conquers the Three Cities,[20] when he subjugates Yama the deva of death, when he destroys Daksha's sacrifice, when he drinks the kalakuta poison, and when he kills many beings.
>
> Some disparage him because he is always with Uma, thinking him intensely attached to her, though gurus meditate on his feet at the center of consciousness in the heart. Some consider him a ferocious person dwelling in cremation grounds, though he is always disciplined by ascetic practice (*tapas*). If even Brahma cannot understand him, how can they, who are Brahma's descendents?

Nevertheless, the prajapatis conclude, the incomprehensible Sadashiva appears on mount Kailasa with the Goddess for the sake of the world (*BP* 8.7.29–35).

In this long prayer the prajapatis praise Shiva as if he were the Plower formation, who provides the basis for everything by obscuring jnana. They identify him with the cult of the Linga of Five Faces, and we know from Akrura's prayer discussed in chapter 6 that one of five ways people worship Narayana is in the shape of Shiva according to the path he teaches, but with differences according to the acharya (*BP* 10.40.8).

Sadashiva responds graciously. He deflects the exalted status the prajapatis assign him by subordinating his self to the Bhagavan in accord with the Pancharatra teaching that Shiva is the Plower's instrumental servant.[21] Shiva says that he is a "good person" (*sadhu*) devoted to Hari (*BP* 8.7.36–40). (He will make a similar move when Krishna attacks Bana, his ardent devotee and Bali's eldest son: *BP* 10.62.2–51; 10.63.34–45). This Great God (Mahadeva) then receives Goddess Bhavani's approval and collects the kalakuta poison in his palms and drinks it. This liquid of defilement (*jalakalmasha*) turns Sadashiva's throat dark blue, a sign that he feels the sufferings of others—and this is the best worship of the atman of all persons. All progeny, Daksha's daughter, Brahma, and Vaikuntha praise this act by Shambu (the Benevolent), the deva of devas.

Finally, Shuka reports that when Sadashiva drinks the poisoned water, some of the kalmasha drips from his cupped hands and it is absorbed by scorpions, snakes (*ahi*), plants, and things that bite and sting (*BP* 8.7.44–46). The snake whose bite Parikshit awaits, and the snake Krishna will banish from the pool of the Yamuna River, embody this kalmasha spilled from Shiva's hands as the deadliest pollution in the deepest level of consciousness deluded by the Plower's inebriation.

Devas and asuras begin again to churn the Milk Ocean, and seven items now appear sequentially. First is the cow who holds the oblation for daily sacrifice called havirdhan, named Kamadhenu because she milks out whatever is desired, and Shurabhi because she is fragrant. Priests of the *Brahman* Doctrine take her for their sacrifices. The next five are crucial to Kshatriyas. First is the vajra of rule, a white horse "of long ears" or "loud neighing" (*uccaihshravas*).[22] The asura king Bali takes him (though he will end up in Indra's court). Another is the white elephant with four tusks, a descendent of "Possessing Food" (Iravat) called Airavata and "Indra of the Invincible" (Varana-indra). He is the paradigm for overcoming all obstacles (*vighna*).[23] Indra takes him, though this telling does not make that explicit. Next appears the lustrous gem called Kaustubha, a chintamani (gem of thought): Whatever its possessor remembers, sees, or envisions is obtained through it, and its touch turns metals and stones to gold. Hari takes it as a brilliant jewel for his chest. The coral tree Parijata then emerges, a kamavriksha (tree of desire) that gives whatever is wanted. Devas take it to ornament Heaven. Next come the bewitching courtesan dancers called apsarases, whose musicians are the male gandharvas, and they go to Indra's court. Finally, Goddess Shri appears visibly as Rama the Charming, who is always engrossed in the Bhagavan. As Majesty she bestows all prosperity and wealth on the Bhagavan's realm, illuminates it in all directions, and entrances everyone.

The devas prepare the unction (*abhisheka*) that will complete Rama's appearance as the mode of majesty (*shri*) appropriate to reside on Ajita's own body. Indra brings the throne, the rivers in their visible forms (*murti*) as persons bring the water in golden pitchers, Goddess Earth brings herbs and plants, cows provide five purifying substances, and Spring gives the two spring months Madhu-Madhava.[24] Seers use these articles to lay out the ritual space, while gandharvas sing and dance. Mridangas and other drums accompany conches, flutes, and plucked stringed instruments (*vina*) in a symphony from the clouds (*BP* 8.8.8–13).

Brahmins begin the ceremony with chanting, and then, as Rama the Charming sits enthroned holding a lotus, the elephants of the four directions pour water in the golden pitchers over her. Rama is now truly herself (*sati*) as Majesty. Her subjects in the three realms of the bright heavens above, the dark underworlds below, and earth in the middle bring gifts. Ocean gives her yellow

silk, Varuna gives her the flower garland signifying victory called Vaijayanti, the prajapati named Vishvakarma gives her ornaments, the Goddess Sarasvati gives her a pearl necklace, and lotus-born Brahma and Nagas give her earrings (*BP* 8.8.14–16).

Rama now takes Varuna's flower garland and arises from her throne to find a husband. No one among the assembled gandharvas, yakshas, asuras, siddhas, charanas, and devas suit her. But (as if to illustrate *Bhagavad Gita* 18.66) she believes that "He Gives Emancipation" (Mukunda) is free from all desire and will not forsake anyone resigned to him in complete trust. She therefore places the victory garland around Ajita's neck. He is Majesty's Favorite or Shrivatsa. In return he gives her his own chest as a place to reside, where she lives as the emblem called Shrivatsa to bring prosperity to all her subjects. Majesty's gracious glance establishes devas, prajapatis, and their progeny in virtuous conduct (*shila*) and other qualities, and gives them supreme repose. But Majesty ignores the asuras. Abandoned by Shri, these descendents of Diti (*daityas*) and Danu (*danavas*) become impure, voluptuous, undisciplined, and shameless (*BP* 8.8.17–29).

Ajita is now inseparably united with Majesty and takes up residence in his palace (*vimana*) on White Island. Devas and asuras resume churning through his power (*bala*). Two royal drinks now emerge. First this time is Varuna's virgin daughter named Varuni, who is liquor (*sura*). Hari allows the asuras to take her because liquor leads to death (*mrita*).[25] As *Manu* says, for kings the worst vice resulting from pleasure (*kama*) is liquor (*panam*), followed in decreasing severity by dice, women, and hunting (*Manu* 7.44–53).

Her complement now emerges, the beverage that leads away from death (*amrita*). It is contained in a pot held by a person of astounding form, a smaller version of Hari as a dark-colored youth wearing a yellow cloth (*BP* 8.8.32–33). His name Dhanvantari (He Moves in a Curve) belongs to a deva who receives Vedic oblations in the northeast quarter of sunrise. This Dhanvantari is a portion of Ajita, who himself is a portion of Hari as Pervading Actor, and he emerges here as physician to devas to teach the Knowledge of Longevity (*ayurveda*).[26] As soon as Dhanvantari appears, however, a shameless asura snatches the pot of amrita out of his hands and flies off with it. The panel depicts this moment.

THE PANEL. The churning paddle Mandara vertically divides this large panel adjacent to the central opening into two parts (Figure 7.4). Vasuki as the churning rope divides the western part horizontally and contains his head and tail. Below the naga is the backside of the robust figure of Bali, king of asuras, holding Vasuki just below his five heads. With his back to the viewer, he looks eastward over his left shoulder toward Vishnu propping up Mandara (Figure 7.5). Vasuki's five heads emerge from Bali's left arm as it grips the snake; all five face Bali as if he is receiving the full force of Vasuki's hot breath.



FIGURE 7.4. Panel 7: Hari as Ajita churns the Ocean of Milk. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

Above and behind the naga stand three crowned devas facing the viewer as they hold the "rope." Only their upper bodies are visible (Figure 7.6). The central figure must be Indra, for the others stand behind him. His right arm grips the snake from beneath and his hand is visible. He looks eastward toward Mandara and Hari. To his right in the place of honor stands a deva whose left shoulder is concealed by Indra. His right arm wraps over the snake and he faces northward. But he gazes down, as if looking at Vasuki's head directly



FIGURE 7.5. Bali holds Vasuki's five heads (detail prior to repair). IFDI.

beneath him, and at Bali. Above him is the asura with the amrita pot he has just snatched from Dhanvantari. This vertical alignment with asuras and Vasuki identifies him as Varuna, deva emperor of asuras and nagas. The asura's legs bend in flight westward behind Varuna's crown, but he faces directly northward and holds the pot at his chest, although the pot is damaged.

To the left of Indra stands an unknown deva, whose right shoulder Indra hides. He grips the snake from beneath and his hand is visible, and peers over Indra's left shoulder as if straining to see Hari and Mandara.

In the panel's eastern part stand the royally dressed Ajita, and on a lower level his small portion Dhanvantari. Hari as Ajita has two pairs of arms and stands facing northward in a posture of graceful bends. His stiff right leg and relaxed left leg thrust the weight of his torso westward to keep the churning paddle upright. He tilts his crowned head eastward, rests his front right hand



FIGURE 7.6. Three devas behind Vasuki, the asura above flies away with the amrita pot (detail). IFDI.

on his eastward-bending hip, and stretches his front left arm up to the top of the churning paddle to keep it in place. His back right arm has broken off, and his back left arm reaches behind the emerging figure of Dhanvantari, but its hand is no longer visible. Dhanvantari, a shorter figure with one pair of arms, faces northward. He stands below Ajita and his crowned head tilting slightly westward reaches the level of Ajita's shoulder. His hands join at his stomach to hold the amrita pot, which is absent. Vasuki winds around the churning paddle at the level of Dhanvantari's left shoulder. Above Ajita's outstretched left arm propping up the paddle are two figures flying away from each other as they look down toward him, both forming the anjalimudra. The figure on the east is Brahma, with two of his four faces visible; his left face has broken off.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the Plower's transforming power (*bala*) acting within the sadhaka's mind (*manas*); the mind is suffused by subject-object consciousness (*vijnana*). Through the Vibhava-diksha the acharya infuses the "milk" of mantra into the sadhaka's mental "ocean," creating thereby an "Ocean of Milk." The act of "churning" this Milky Ocean denotes Hari's action through the mantras applied by the sadhaka in sadhana. As Shuka tells the emperor Parikshit, it is through churning that poets know the atman standing inside their selves (*BP* 7.1.9).

Pancharatra texts imply the Vibhava-diksha's connection to the Churning of the Milk Ocean, but do not state it explicitly. In the *Satvata-samhita* the Plower says that during the preliminary stage of the triad of consecrations, before performing the specific rites that differentiate them, the acharya consecrates the devotee with various mantras. The devotee is then to feel the Bhagavan pervading his or her entire body and is to worship him as the Supporter (*adhara*) and the Supported (*adheya*) (*SS* 18.111–160; Smith 1975: 528). The *Pauskara-samhita* explains that the Supporter's potency (*adhara-shakti*) manifests itself as Tortoise and as Snake (*Pauskara-samhita* 22.4–12; Smith 1975: 284). Here "snake" can refer to Vasuki, to the Plower, or to both. In the same context, the Bhagavan likens his self to an ocean—pure consciousness without ripples; it diversifies by means of manifold powers (*shakti*) (*Pauskara-samhita* 22.54–74; Smith 1975: 284).

Consecration (*diksha*) to the eight-syllable mantra (*Om namo narayanaya*) appears to be the means by which Ajita on Vaikuntha enters into the devotee's mental ocean. (The Vibhava-diksha is examined at greater length in Appendix 2.) The human body (*sharira, deha*) becomes Brahma's body (*brahmanda*) through the consecration, which means that the devas and asuras of the story are within Brahma and the sadhaka simultaneously. Because of Ajita's mantra presence within his or her mental processes, the sadhaka must maintain a pure, disciplined, and ritualized life of sadhana. By means of it Ajita acts on behalf of his protected "slave" (*bhagavata*) by supporting devas over against asuras until the time of life is up and Sadashiva's kalakuta poison comes into play. This is what the struggle to keep amrita in the hands of devas means for a sadhaka: God's gracious gift of a prosperous and majestic (*shrimat*) life of one hundred years.

This panel illustrates the third stage in the Plower's indefatigable and transformative power (*bala*) moving the sadhaka toward "awakening." As Natalia R. Lidova explains, it derives from the ancient Vedic rite of making soma, "performed by any householder with his wife" (Lidova 1994: 132). The process is recorded in *Rig Veda* 1.28, one of seven attributed to Shunahshepa while tied to the stake as victim in Harischandra's rajasuya. The householders first pound the soma plants with a stone to release their juices. They position a round post as a pivot, place the churning paddle on it, and wrap a cord around

both. They pour the extracted juices into a mortar containing water and other substances, and pull the cord's two ends back and forth to twirl the paddle and churn the liquid (described by Wilson 1990: 1, 84). In the story, Hari as Tortoise is pivot, the ocean is the water in the mortar, the plants from Mount Mandara are the pounded soma as milk,[27] and the amrita in Dhanvantari's pot is the soma purified.

Yet Agama appears to have moved this soma-amrita one step farther from its Vedic origins: The juices of plants put into the ocean to be churned into amrita do not signify soma plants, but mantras imparted to the sadhaka's consciousness. Kalikanri, we recall, represents the acharya teaching the meaning of the eight-syllable mantra to the "newly born" Nandivarman as a mother nursing her infant for over two hours in the presence of the reclining father. Churning is now the mind's activation of mantra through predawn repetition called japa. Daily japa performed during the last hour of night over a lifetime, Bhagavatas believe, will produce knowledge, longevity, and prosperity, because these mantras embody Vasudeva's jnana and transforming bala.

Finally, Mandara, the name of the golden mountain used to churn the Milk Ocean, means "slow," "sluggish," and "dull," an apt description of the sadhaka's normal mental activity. It is golden because it has been purified and disciplined through refuge in the acharya and his training, but sluggish nevertheless. In the end only Hari as Ajita can empower this sluggish mind by means of japa during Brahma's hour.

To summaize, then: first, this large panel adjacent to the central window in this northern side signifies the transforming bala of the Plower formation, who is depicted below on the sanctum. Second, it represents the murti Narayana, as does the large panel on the other side of the window. Moreover, this episode, which takes place during the sixth Manu Term, locates Indra's royal status in Vedic ceremony, a status the asuras continually dispute. Devas and asuras share Kashyapa as their father, but have different mothers. Devas, as beings of brightness, are favored by the Bhagavan, yet asuras as beings of darkness are equally valid and necessary opponents to devas in a universe that is ever changing. Devas and asuras both patronize Brahmins, sponsor Vedic sacrifices addressed to the Bhagavan, God of them all, and both have court priests and acharyas. Yet devas, not asuras, are on the side of humans. People therefore make their offerings to devas led by Indra. Hari churns the Milk Ocean to provide both devas and asuras with requisites of their rule, but favors Indra, even though Bali is the wiser of the two.

This story of the churning of the Milk Ocean derives from the Vedic rite of obtaining pure soma, which is then offered to Indra. The goal of the Vedic ceremony and the goal of the story are the same—to obtain soma/amrita for Indra—but the story derives other essential elements of kingship from the churning. Two liquids emerge from it to frame the episode. The liquid at the beginning, kalakuta, signifies Indra's death. Shiva keeps it until Indra's life is

to end. The liquid at the end, amrita, signifies Indra's prosperous longevity. In between Indra's death and prosperous longevity emerge the essential accoutrements of royal court, which are distributed among all the participants in the churning. These accoutrements reveal the Bhagavata understanding of Indra's kingship: 1) His royal status depends on Ajita, for he makes the churning happen. Moreover, Ajita possesses Majesty (Goddess Shri) and endless wealth (the Kaustubha gem). Whatever majesty and wealth Indra has therefore comes from Ajita. 2) Indra's court possesses these essential accoutrements: the white elephant of prosperity, the white horse of victory (which he will later seize from Bali), the Parijata tree that grants wishes, and the apsaras dancers and gandharva musicians who perform in his court. 3) Indra's rule is sustained by his patronage of sacrifices performed by Brahmins, who use Kamadhenu's milk to offer oblations with Hari in mind. 4) In the end, all that Bali and his asuras have is liquor, which befuddles them and enhances their dark and lustful natures.

Another meaning that emerges is that in the seventh Manu Term there appears on Bharata an "Indra of Men" (Narendra). He is "born" through the Vedic rajasuya ceremony. This Indra of Men rules in imitation of the Indra of Devas and creates his court on earth in imitation of Indra's court in heaven. Like Indra, he keeps in his court a royal horse, a royal elephant, Brahmins and cows, an acharya, and dancers and musicians. But like Bali he also keeps liquor.

Finally, in the context of this northern side of the sanctum, this story represents the royal sadhaka's mental "churning" of his vijnana consciousness, which has already been infused with the "milk" of mantras during his earlier consecration (*diksha*). The act of churning is his japa, the quiet repetition of secret mantras. "The brilliant Primordial Light does not break through for the masses," Shuka tells Parikshit, "but wise men churn and eventually know the atman established within themselves" (*BP* 8.1.9). The entire episode depicts this Bhagavata king's awareness that his status as an Indra of Men is Hari's gracious gift; and that Hari and Goddess Shri dwelling in Vaikuntha in the Ocean of Milk is their presence dwelling in his own purified consciousness infused by the "milk" of mantras.

8

Northern Panels of the Northern Path

Fortifying Omniscience

Blazing Omniscient Knowledge

The first three panels (5–7) on the north wall, discussed in the last chapter, represent Hari's indefatigable churning power (*bala*) in the Plower formation; the second three panels (8–10), which we will look at here, represent his brilliantly blazing omniscient knowledge (*jnana*). The story of Man-as-Lion (Nrisimha or Narasimha) is the subject of the first two of these three panels; the third depicts the story of Krishna banishing the snake Kaliya from a Yamuna River pool. The first panel's location adjacent to the central window, its large size, and its distinctive frame tie it to the preceding panel with the same characteristics. But transformation gives way to purification as we move eastward.

Panel 8: Narasimha Grasps Hiranyakashipu

Panel 9: Narasimha Rips Open Hiranyakashipu at His Navel

The Man-lion story depicted by these first two panels refers explicitly to the north-south axis both here on the middle sanctum and below on the vimana. This story, for example, refers to the sage Markandeya, who appears in the second set on the bottom (Panel N5). The purana attributed to Markandeya contains the story of Dattatreya (*MP* 16–44; he appears on the southeast corner facing south (Panel

S1). As part of this purana, Markandeya tells the "Glorification of the Goddess" (*Devi Mahatmyam*) (*MP* 81–93), which is about Goddess Chandika Durga, who emanates from Madhusudana; he appears on this sanctum, adjacent to the central window as the murti Madhusudana. Above the window is a small and badly worn sculpted relief showing Goddess Chandika Durga battling the asura Buffalo (Mahisha).

Kalikanri also notes this north-south axis in his stanza about these two Man-lion panels: "One day, in the shape of a lion / With nails sharp as diamond, / The Lord fighting the Valorous One / Clawed his waist and tore it open, / And in beautiful Kacci / Encircled by mansions / He has His place, // The Vishnu-house which the Emperor serves, / The Sovereign who rules the Pallavas / In the shade of his White Umbrella / after he raised / the Spear and Banner / of the khatvanga / spine of bones / high above the army" (*PT* 2.9.6). This pair of panels here on the north appears in the first half of the stanza; Madhsudana and Goddess Chandika Durga on the south appear in the second half of the stanza. The "spine of bones" carried into battle by Nandivarman's general was the khatvanga, a scepter shaped like the spinal column and topped by one or more skulls. As we noted in chapter 4, Nandivarman received the khatvanga as a ritual instrument of rule during his unction as Kanchipuram's Indra of Men about 731.

The khatvanga signifies brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) in the extreme. According to the "Glorification of the Goddess," when Goddess Chandika Durga knits her eyebrows in wrath, Goddess Kali emerges from them. Goddess Kali wears a garland of humanlike heads and carries a sword, a noose and, notably, the khatvanga (*Devi Mahatmyam* 7.5–6). Kalikanri says in the poem that (by means of his general Udayachandra) Nandivarman raised the khatvanga "high above the army" during battle. This appears to denote a rite to invoke Durga's tejas in its most intensely wrathful mode against his "asura" enemies supported by the Pandyan at Madurai.

The lion as Goddess Chandika Durga's mount (*vahana*) represents her, just as the khatvanga represents Goddess Kali. Durga's mount denotes wrathful tejas. The Pallavas used the lion as their protecting emblem throughout their realm, and in this Vishnu-house it appears frequently on the prakara walkway, the porch, and the vimana (Figures I.5, 4.1). Her lion literally embodies her tejas. We shall return to Durga and her lion later.

In this pair of panels facing north, the lion appears as a man. The man-as-lion refers to two aspects of Narayana's grace: the human shape denotes the acharya; the lion shape represents jnana's blazing tejas in the acharya. This tejas within the acharya purifies the sadhaka through two different consecrations and their sadhanas. The first is the Narasimha-diksha, which requires daily rites for Man-lion and qualifies anyone to receive the Vibhava-diksha, which we know Nandivarman received. The second is the Vyuha-diksha illustrated here, which Nandivarman did not receive, because its sadhana is

incompatible with active rule. The Vyuha-diksha produces a sadhana of two sequential stages employing a single material form (*ekamurti*) and a wheel of colors and letters (*varnachakra*). The sadhana's first stage relates to deep sleep (*sushupti*) and its second to dreaming (*svapna*). (Waking—*jagrat*—appears in the third consecration and the next panel.) A twofold teaching belonging to the *Atharva Veda* matches this twofold sadhana. It is "The Secret Teaching about Man-lion's Burning" (*Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishad*) consisting of prior (*purva*) and latter (*uttara*) portions (Deussen 1980 2: 809–861). (The three dikshas are discussed at greater length in Appendix 2.) The climax of the Man-lion story similarly consists of penultimate and ultimate events. This double structure of sadhana, secret teaching, and story explains why paired panels depict the Man-lion story here and elsewhere in temples of the period.[1]

NARRATIVE FRAMES. The *Bhagavata Purana* tells the Man-lion story at great length and uses the device of literary framing to do so (*BP* 7.1–10). It places stories inside other stories to create narrative boxes that illuminate each other, at times with humor and irony. Other teachings in the *Bhagavata Purana* also use this ancient literary technique, but we shall limit our exploration of it to this single, if lengthy, case. The structure of the narration is diagramed in Figure 8.1.

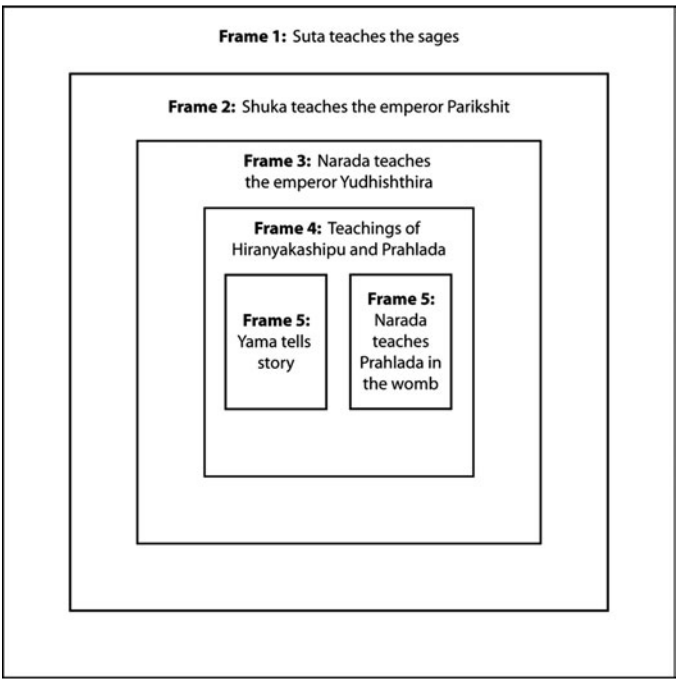


FIGURE 8.1. Visual representation of narrative frames. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

This story uses five narrative frames to discuss the bipartite process of birth and death in the terms of the richly complex tripartite process (*triguna*) of matter, which G. J. Larson places at the heart of the samkhya doctrine of the three gunas or threads (Larson and Bhattacharya 1987: 65–73). The threads, of course, are clarity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), and ignorance (*tamas*). God weaves both cosmos and person out of them and follows the same pattern for both, but turns the person inside out, as we shall discuss in the introduction to part III. This tripartite process also reveals unexpected complexity in other dyads, such as good and bad, knowledge and ignorance, and the righteous and the wicked.

These panels depict omniscience purifying a sadhaka split between a newly born delight (*prahlada*) in Krishna and a mature ego focused on itself as "This am I." If unchecked by wisdom and submission to an acharya's discipline, the sadhaka may visualize sensual objects. Passion from the thread of rajas will then produce clinging (*sanga*). From it will arise greed (*lobha*), leading to desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*), and they may lead him to employ mantra and ritual for goals opposed to his young delight in Krishna.[2] The Man-lion story vividly illustrates the problem and its solution.

The scene in this first panel of the pair is the climactic moment just before Man-as-lion rips apart the asura king Hiranyakashipu (Golden Clothes), who has taken over Indra's throne in the east (*BP* 7.8.26). The next panel portrays his slaughter. In both cases the viewer stands in the place of Delight or Prahlada watching his father's destruction. Man-lion destroys Hiranyakashipu in the assembly hall of Indra's palace, which is east of great Meru on the Manasottara (Beyond the Mind) mountain range on the circular continent called Pushkara (Blue Lotus Flower) (*BP* 5.21.7). This means that in Brahma's macrocosmic body, the slaughter takes place at the outermost boundary of his subtle body and mental processes, at the very edge of spacetime. In the sadhaka's microcosmic body, this slaughter analogously takes place at the innermost edge of mental processes deep within.[3]

FRAME 1. SUTA TEACHES SHAUNAKA AND OTHER SEERS. After the Kali Yuga begins, Brahmin seers at a Vaishnava center in the Naimisha forest perform a thousand-year sattra ceremony for the sake of gaining heaven. They are led by Shaunaka, master of the Rig Veda (BP 1.1.4). Also there is the charioteer (*suta*) named Ugrashrava, son of Romaharshana and a disciple of Vyasa. From his father he had learned ancient lore (*purana*), history (*itihasa*), and the system of right order (*dharmashastra*). During a break, the seers ask the suta to tell them the "pure Bhagavata story" (BP 1.4.2). Why did the Bhagavan take birth through Vasudeva's wife Devaki as the master of the Satvatas? What did he and Balarama do? How has the right order been supported since they left earth? (BP 1.1.1–23). Shaunaka says that if the Krishna story (*Krishnakatha*) is long it does not matter, because blessed Death has been invoked in the sacrifice and is present; he can listen with everyone else and no one is likely to die (BP 1.16.5–8).

The charioteer then venerates the teacher known as Shuka (Parrot) and explains that they seek the essence contained in the purana with the name *Bhagavatam*, which Shuka taught the emperor Parikshit.

Frame 2. Shuka Teaches Parikshit the Origin of the *Bhagavatam*. This teaching has a long lineage. Brahma learns it at the beginning of his kalpa. While practicing tapas he receives the vision of the Bhagavan Hari and prostrates before him. Hari teaches him supremely secret knowledge about himself (*BP* 2.9.30). Hari's shape (*rupa*) vanishes, Brahma venerates, and then he emanates spacetime and teaches his son Narada what Hari had taught him, the "*Bhagavata Purana* of ten characteriscs" (*BP* 2.9.42–43).

In the meantime, Vyasa (Compiler), who had been born in the previous Dvapara Yuga as a part (*kala*) of Hari, is sitting alone on the bank of the Sarasvati River in distress. He remembers that he had re-edited the Veda because the Kali Yuga was approaching, and had composed the *Mahabharata* as a way to make Veda available to everyone—because women, Shudras, and degenerates of the twice-born ritual classes may not hear Veda. But he had unfortunately not included the Bhagavata Dharma in any of this (*BP* 1.4.14, 24–29; 1.5.31). Narada suddenly arrives and tells Vyasa to enter samadhi, where he will learn the Krishna story and then tell it to others. Afer Narada leaves, Vyasa goes to an ashram at Shamyaprasa on the western bank of the Saravati River, where he sits and enters samadhi. While he is visualizing the supreme *brahman* Narada teaches him the *Bhagavata Purana* of ten characteristics. Afterward he composes the *Satvata-samhita*, which he later revises and teaches to his son Shuka as the *Bhagavata-samhita*, and Shuka now teaches it to Parikshit (*BP* 1.5.13; 2.9.43; 1.7.1–8).

(Back to) Frame 1. Suta Teaches the Sages about Parikshit and Shuka. The seers inquire about Parikshit's career, and Suta describes at length the events that led to his death early in the Kali Yuga. Parikshit was a disciple of Shuka. He performed three horse sacrifices on the southern bank of the Ganga River, but because Krishna and Balarama were gone from earth, the asura Kali was distintegrating dharma and Vedic sacrifices, just like a Shudra with no respect for Brahmins who pretends to be a Kshatriya (*BP* 1.16.2–4). Parikshit defeated him and forbade him from entering Brahmavarta; dharma flourished there and sacrifices were made to Hari, the Ruler of Sacrifices whose material form is sacrifice. Nevertheless, he gave Kali five places to dwell: wherever gambling, drinking liquor, debauchery, and slaughter take place, and in gold (*BP* 1.17.38–41). Parikshit's prowess then is what allows Shaunaka and the other seers to perform this sattra of a thousand years now (*BP* 1.17.45). The sages ask Suta what the great Bhagavata Parikshit learned from Shuka that led him to Hari's feet, and Suta answers by telling them the cause of Parikshit's imminent death: He allegedly humiliated an Angirasa Brahmin seer.

One day while hunting, Parikshit becomes extremely hungry and thirsty. He comes upon a Brahmin seer in the line of Angiras deep in samadhi. He asks for water and when the seer does not respond he becomes irrationally angry. To test whether the Brahmin is truly in samadhi or merely showing contempt toward a Kshatriya, Parikshit picks up a dead snake with his bow and places it around the sage's neck. He then returns to his capital (*BP* 1.18.1–3, 16–17, 24–31).

When the sage's son learns that his father sits in samadhi in a humiliated condition, he assumes a Kshatriya must have put the snake there, and he immediately curses whoever humiliated his father to be bitten in seven days by the deadly snake Takshaka (Cutter). When he finally reaches his father, he cries out in horror at what he sees and his cry brings his father out of trance. The seer sees the dead snake around his neck and, with supreme indifference, throws it away. But when he asks his son why he weeps and hears of the curse, he chastises him for inflicting a major punishment for a minor offence. A king is not an ordinary man, he says, but is a man as deva. Without his tejas, disorder (*adharma*) will destroy the noble order (*aryadharma*) of ritual class, stage of life, and disciplined behavior (*varnashrama-achara*). People will become as promiscuous as dogs and monkeys (*BP* 1.18.32–50).

In the meantime, Parikshit repents of his deed and learns of the curse. He resolves to purify himself by fasting to death with his mind focused on Krishna. He turns his empire over to his son Janamejaya, goes to the Ganga's south bank, and sits down facing north on a bed of kusha grass with the tips facing east. Devas pour flowers on him, and seers gather around to support him. When Parikshit asks them what he should do now that death is imminent, Vyasa's son Shuka appears on the scene; he looks to be about sixteen years old, has dark skin, and is totally naked, because he is an avadhuta, a radical ascetic freed of all desire. Parikshit bows to him and asks what he should do while he awaits death. Shuka's answer is to tell him the *Bhagavata Purana* he had learned from his father Vyasa near the end of the Dvapara Yuga (*BP* 1.19.1–7, 17, 25–28; 2.1.8).

(Back to) Frame 2. Shuka Teaches Parikshit the *Bhagavatam*. Shuka begins by teaching the great value of chanting Hari's names. He tells Parikshit he has only seven days to live and to use them practicing yoga, which he describes in detail. It begins with visualizing the Bhagavan's grossly material shape (*sthula rupa*) of seven sheaths (*kosha*). It moves on to fixed concentration (*dharana*) on the Person born in the womb of primordial matter called *viraj*.[4] This Person (who is Narayana reclining in the dark waters) permeates the gross shape and is the true Bhagavan, the Supreme Person as the first avatara, Aniruddha the Unobstructed from whom everything emerges, including the avataras of play (*lila-avatara*) (*BP* 2.1.14, 22–25. 2.7.41, 45).

Shuka teaches at great length (*BP* 2.7–7.1). Eventually Parikshit poses a question. He has heard stories of the Bhagavan assisting Indra in his battle with the asura named Vritra (Restrainer), and wonders how he can fight asuras on behalf of devas when he is friend to everyone. He transcends matter's material threads, so why would he oppose asuras and fear them? The question is important, Shuka says, because its answer reveals Hari's wondrous story and his devotees' greatness. Hari uses his maya "to appear in the condition of both the oppressed and the oppressor." Through maya he activates matter's threads and weaves them in patterns that chastise those who should be chastised. When purity (*sattva*) dominates the pattern, he intensifies the power of devas and seers and impels it to make bodies for him to enjoy. When passion (*rajas*) dominates, he intensifies the power of asuras and impels it to create bodies for souls to enjoy. When darkness (*tamas*) dominates, he intensifies the power of yakshas and rakshasas and impels it for his sleep. All of this happens according to his movement as Time (*BP* 7.1.1–11).

To illustrate this teaching, Shuka tells Parikshit the old legend (*purva itihasa*) Narada once told to Yudhisthira at his rajasuya.

FRAME 3. NARADA TELLS YUDHISHTHIRA THE STORY OF HIRANYAKASHIPU. Yudhishthira performs the rajasuya according to the instructions Varuna gave Harishchandra (*BP* 10.74). During its soma offering, Yudhishthira venerates Krishna as Ruler of Senses and honored guest. Shishupala stands up to refute him; after much commotion Krishna slices off Shishupala's head with his wheel. But then, as everyone watches in astonishment, Shishupala's soul enters into Krishna in the emancipation known as "yoking with God" (*sayujya*) (*BP* 7.1.12–47).[5] When Yudhisthira wonders why his maternal cousins merge with Krishna, Narada explains by describing "This am I," and telling the ancient legend (*purva itihasa*) of Hiranyakashipu.

"This am I," Narada says, arises within consciousness when awareness as a person (*purusha*) is confused with matter (*prakriti*). This confusion produces the awareness of oneself as one's material body. Thereafter, "This am I" perceives dualities and experiences injury, insult, and death as violence (*himsa*). But the Bhagavan feels no such injury, insult, or death because he is beyond matter and contains it. He punishes persons for their own good, not because he seeks them harm (*himsa*). It is important to concentrate on him continuously for whatever reason (*BP* 7.1.22–25). Shishupala and Dantavaktra, for example, demonstrate that antagonism (*dvesha*) toward the Bhagavan is an excellent means to concentrate the mind (*manas*), better than the discipline of sharing in him (*bhaktiyoga*). The gopis attained Vasudeva through erotic desire (*kama*), Kamsa through fear (*bhaya*), Shishupala and other kings through hatred (*dvesha*), the Vrishnis through kinship (*sambandha*), "you Pandavas" through affection (*sneha*), and "we seers" through devout sharing (*bhakti*).

The reason Shishupala and Dantavaktra hated Krishna, Narada continues, is because of their previous lives. They originally dwelled in Vishnu's realm (*vishnupada*), but were cursed by sages (*vipra*) and fell from it. How can Hari's slaves (*haridasa*) devoted exclusively to him be expelled from Vaikuntha City, Yudhishthira asks, for they have no physical body (*deha*), no sense organs, and no vital breaths? Why would they be connected to a body in this realm of death and birth (*BP* 7.1.30–34)? Narada answers by briefly telling the story of two attendants in Vishnu's Realm named Jaya (Victory) and Vijaya (Conquest).

Brahma has four sons born of his mind, named Sanaka (Ancient), Sanandana (Joyful), Sanatana (Eternal), and Sanatkumara (Ever Young). One day they go to Vaikuntha City and encounter Jaya and Vijaya standing guard at its entrance. Brahma's sons are nude and look like children, and the guards make fun of them. This disrespect, of course, elicits Vasudeva's judgment and he gives them a choice of punishments; they choose to be born into samsara three times in a row as brothers opposed to Vishnu. Jaya the elder is born therefore as the asura named Hiranyakashipu (Golden Clothes) and Vijaya the younger as Hiranyaksha (Golden Eyes). Hari kills Hirianyaksha when he takes the shape of a boar, and later kills Hiranyakashipu when he takes the shape of a lion. Jaya and Vijaya are born next as the rakshasa brothers named Ravana (Cry Causer) and Kumbhakarna (Pot Ears). Hari kills them when he is the hero Rama in the Raghu Dynasty. Narada tells Yudhishthira that the sage Markandeya will tell him that story, which he does in the *Mahabharata* as the *Ramayana* (*Mahabharata* 3.257–275; van Buitenen 2: 723–760). The brothers are finally born as Yudhishthira's maternal cousins; Jaya is Shishupala (Child Protector) and and Vijaya is Dantavaktra (Crooked Tusk). Krishna slays Shishupala with his wheel and Dantavaktra with his mace, and this time they dissolve into him, the Unfallen (*achyuta*), and resume their positions at the entrance to Vaikuntha City (*BP* 7.1.39–46).

Yudhishthira is intrigued about about Jaya's first birth as the asura Hiranyakashipu and asks Narada to tell him more:

After Hiriyanaksha dies at the hands of Boar, Hiranyakashipu is so grief stricken and angry that he vows to kill Vishnu, whose death will kill devas, he thinks, because Vishnu is their life-breath. He vows to pierce Hari's neck with his trident and use his blood to offer libations for his dead brother.[6] Hiranyakashipu sends asuras to earth to attack Brahmins and Kshatriyas and wipe out Vedic sacrifices and rites, which are Vishnu's roots and sustenance (*BP* 7.2.9–11). He charges them to burn up all villages and towns, cut down all trees, and destroy all vegetation. The asuras do so. Under assault and weakened from the lack of the oblations that sustain them, devas leave heaven and wander earth in disguise.

Hiranyakashipu performs the funeral ceremonies for his brother. His mother, Diti, and his brother's wives and children are grieving, of course, and he uses the dharma of warriors to console them. He explains it through "an-

alytical reasoning" (*samkhya*), the doctrine that accompanies the practice of "yoking together" (*yoga*) body, mind, and speech in the search for the true self.

The hero who dies in battle, he says, is not to be mourned, because all beings live in this world like travelers; they gather at a watershed to drink and then go their own ways; fate (*daiva*) uses karma to determine their journeys. It is true that the eternal Self or atman is unchanging, pure, omnipresent, and omniscient, but its proximity to distilled mental activity causes distilled matter to weave a subtle body (*linga*) of material threads (*guna*).[7] These threads impel mental activity to perceive the atman's pure and disembodied consciousness as a person (*puman*) with a body. This person clings to whatever is pleasing, rejects whatever is displeasing, and lives because of its acts propelled by desire. His action produces and destroys, and its maya creates sorrow, memory of various matters, nondiscrimination and anxious thought, and even discrimination in what is misunderstood (*BP* 7.2.21–26). Hiranyakashipu illustrates all of this with the ancient legend of Yama deva teaching the widows of the king of Ushinara named Suyajna (Auspicious Sacrifice).

FRAME 4. HIRANYAKASHIPU TELLS HIS MOTHER DITI THE STORY OF YAMA AND THE WIDOWS. King Suyajna of Ushinara lies dead on a battlefield, his heart pierced by an arrow. His mourning wives hold the corpse and long to go with him; once he brought them pleasure, but now he brings only sorrow. The sun begins to set, but they will not release the corpse for cremation. Yama deva, Master of the Dead, is Dharma itself and must keep death and birth in their proper order (*dharma*). To persuade them to let go of the corpse, he approaches them in the form of a boy. "I am amazed at my elders' delusion (*moha*)," he says, "because you mourn for someone who has gone where you will go too."

The Ruler (*isha*), Yama tells them, emits, sustains, and destroys the universe as his own play (*krida*). Over time material beings (*bhutani*) come and go according to karma. "The living king who once responded to you is not this corpse," he says. "It is a material body (*sharira*) born of delusion (*mohaja*) for the person of awareness (*purusha*). The man (*puman*) you perceived as king and husband stood apart from his body's material threads as he acted through them."

As the boy explains, the tejas of the omnipresent (*vibhu*) produces and rejects gross and subtle bodies composed of elements, sense organs, and mind. Only the atman is permanent, all else is transitory. Those who know this do not grieve, because grief cannot change the nature (*svabhava*) of anything (*BP* 7.2.27–49). He tells the story of the hunter and the shrikes (*kulinga*) to make his point.

FRAME 5. YAMA TELLS THE STORY OF THE SHRIKES AND THE HUNTER. One day a hunter spreads his net in the forest to catch birds and hides behind a tree. He entices a pair of fork-tailed shrikes (*kulinga*), and the female becomes

entangled in his net. Out of his loving attachment (*sneha*) to her, the male laments piteously; he is sorry for her and for himself, because the loss of her is the loss of half his self, and he anguishes over his chicks expecting their mother. But as he is grieving, Time (*kala*) prompts the hunter hiding behind the tree to shoot and kill him.[8]

(Back to) Frame 4. Hiranyakashipu Again Talks to His Mother Diti. Hiranyakashipu resumes his story of Yama and the widows. "You are like the kulinga bird in your foolish grief," Yama tells them. "You may mourn for a hundred years but will achieve nothing." Suyajna's wives now understand that everything is impermanent and propelled by Time, and Yama disappears. They let go of their husband's corpse and his relatives perform the cremation rites (*BP* 7.2.57–59).

(Back to) Frame 3. Narada Tells Yudhisthira the Story of Hiranyakashipu. We again hear Narada's voice, telling Yudhisthira the story of Hiranyakashipu. He reports that Hiranyakashipu told his mother and sisters-inlaw: "Therefore, don't grieve for yourselves or for others. After all, when the sense of distinction vanishes, who then is oneself and who is the other? What is one's own and what is another's?" Diti and her daughters-in-law stop grieving (*BP* 7.2.58–61).

When the funeral rites are over, Narada continues, Hiranyakashipu sets out to use yoga to make himself the invincible, deathless, and ever-youthful sovereign of the world. He begins the most austere modes of ascetic practice (*tapas*) in the valley of the mountain called Mandara (Sluggish), before it is used to churn the Milk Ocean. He holds up his hands, stands on his toes, and gazes at the stars to bring Brahma down from the peak of spacetime in Realm of True Being (*satyaloka*). Ants eat his body and envelop it with their hills sprouting grass and reeds. Devas eventually urge Brahma to respond. He appears before the anthill hidden by grass and reeds, tells Hiranyakashipu he may have whatever he wants, and sprinkles the hill with water from his pot. The asura instantly emerges as a young man with a body hard as diamond (*vajra*) and a golden glow. Hiranyakashipu now matches his name, Golden Clothes.

The newly born asura falls at Brahma's feet and praises him at length as the Golden Embryo (Hiranyagarbha), whose body is transcendent, subtle, and gross. Hiranyakashipu then asks for a very rich gift: None of Brahma's creatures shall be able to kill him by day or night, on earth or in sky, or as man or animal; no weapon shall harm him, nor anything with or without life; he shall not be killed by deva, asura, or snake, nor in battle; he shall be made emperor of all the worlds with the imperishable fame and splendor of Brahma and the world-protectors obtained by great people through tapas and yoga. Amazingly, Brahma gives it all. Hiranyakashipu is now the greatest of all perfected (*siddha*) practitioners of yoga and intends to use his perfection to live forever (*BP* 7.3).

With renewed strength and a diamond-hard body shining like gold, Hiranyakashipu sets out to avenge his brother by attacking Vishnu. He brings all three worlds under control and assumes the role of the world-guardians. He controls all beings—devas, asuras, and humans; he moves into Indra's palace, where everyone waits on him except Narayana's three material forms (*trimurti*) as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Even though his eyes are red from drink, his tapas and yoga keep his body strong and senses and mind firm.

Heaven and earth pour wealth and pleasure on Hiranyakashipu, but he is not satisfied; satisfaction arises only when the senses are properly controlled, and his are not because he indulges in all manner of pleasure. Intoxicated by this sovereignty and in violation of the shastras, he goes on for a very long time in this arrogant living and incurs Brahma's curse. The unnerved guardians of the world go for refuge to the Unfallen. A voice responds, "When Hiranyakashipu persecutes his son Prahlada, Hari will destroy him" (*BP* 7.4.21–28).

Among Hiranyakashipu's four sons, Prahlada, which means delight, is noted for his excellent qualities. He is an asura, but does not act like one. Krishna identifies with him because he is "delight in Krishna" (*BP* 7.4.30–43; *BG* 10.30). At times, however, this delightful boy behaves oddly. As a child he had seemed stupid because the grasping Krishna caught hold of his atman, and in Govinda's embrace toys are of no interest. He did not know the world around him, nor did he know when he sat, walked, ate, drank, or lay down. Sometimes he wept, sometimes he laughed, sometimes he sang, sometimes he shouted, sometimes he danced, and sometimes he imitated Krishna's deeds. At other times Govinda's touch made him speechless; his hair would stand on end and tears would fall from his half-closed eyes. He served Krishna's feet and spent time with people freed of possessions and was supremely tranquil in his self. Because of this he would bring equanimity (*sama*) to people of bad inclinations (*dushana*) (*BP* 7.4.42).

Hiranyakashipu's domestic priest (*purohita*) is Shukra (Bright), who will also serve his great-grandson Bali. Shukra has two sons, Shanda and Amarka, and they are put in charge of Prahlada's education. He listens, but thinks what they teach is not good because they say that the distinction between oneself and another is true (*BP* 7.5.3). One day Hiranyakashipu takes his delightful son on his lap and asks, "What do you think is good (*sadhu*)?" Prahlada answers that "I" and "Mine" harass embodied beings incessantly and so it is good to renounce the household and enter the forest to take refuge with Hari. The king laughs. He thinks someone has perverted his son's mind and warns his teachers to keep away Vishnu's Brahmin partisans.

Prahlada returns to Shanda and Amarka, and they ask him how he learned things alien to boys. The Bhagavan causes one to see the distinction between oneself and another, he answers, but he had erased that misperception in him. Now, just as a piece of iron in the presence of a magnet automatically moves toward it, his consciousness (*chetas*) automatically moves toward the Bhagavan

holding the wheel (*BP* 7.5.11–14). The alarmed teachers and send for a whipping rod. Prahlada, they say, "is the thorn bush born in this sandalwood forest of Diti's sons; Vishnu's axe uproots its root and uses the little boy as its handle" (*BP* 7.5.17). They teach him carefully, only about human life's three goals of righteousness (*dharma*), prosperity (*artha*), and pleasure (*kama*), and nothing at all about emancipation from it all (*moksha*) as the fourth.

Hiranyakashipu again sends for his delightful son, takes him on his lap, and asks, "Among the lessons you've learned so far, which are the best?" "They are the nine elements of devotion to Vishnu," he answers, "which are hearing and singing about him, remembering his feet and serving them, paying him homage, venerating him, working for him, being a friend to him, and surrendering to him. I think they are the best lesson I have learned." His father is furious. The teachers deny having taught him any such ideas, and he asks his son where he got them. Prahlada answers that firm devotion to Krishna and inner perception of Vishnu come only through "unction with the dust of the feet" of those who possess nothing but him (*BP* 7.5.19–24, 30–32).

The enraged king shoves his son off his lap and orders his rakshasa guards to kill him (*BP* 7.5.33–41). "Prahlada wants to serve Vishnu, who killed my brother who was like his father! He can't be trusted. What use even to Vishnu will be a five-year-old who throws away inviolate affection for his own parents? He's like a diseased limb, he must be cut off and thrown away before he infects the whole body."[9] The rakshasas begin shouting "pierce" and "cut" and stab at Prahlada with their tridents, but his mind is absorbed in the supreme *brahman*, the Bhagavan who is the Self of all, and nothing harms him. Hiranyakashipu anxiously tries other ways to kill his delightful son. He uses trampling elephants, snakebites, and rites of black magic. He rolls him down a mountain, imprisons him, poisons him, and starves him. He exposes him to bad weather, fire, storm, and water. Yet nothing works. Hiranyakashipu is perplexed and worried. "This boy is like Shunahshepa and will not forget what I have done. Will he cause my death?" (*BP* 7.5.45–47).

Shanda and Amarka still think their student can be educated, and to keep him from running away until Shukra returns, they suggest tying him down with Varuna's rope (as his grandson Bali will be). Hiranyakashipu agrees and tells them to teach the restrained Prahlada only about the duty of kings and householders. But Prahlada still thinks these subjects are worthless. Whenever Shanda and Amarka leave the room, their students ask Prahlada to play, and usually he mentions the sorry nature of the worldly life and declines. But he is compassionate and friendly, and one day the others gather around him to hear what he has to say.

Frame 4. Prahlada Teaches the Asura Students. Prahlada tells them that the wise man should practice Bhagavata Dharma from childhood because human birth is rare and uncertain.[10] A man lives at most one hundred years,

and half of it he sleeps through as if a corpse. He spends the first twenty years of the other half in childish ignorance and youthful play, and the last twenty years in aging degeneration. In between, desire (*kama*) and infatuation (*moha*) attach him to the householder's life, and his progeny tie him down as if he is a pet monkey kept on a leash by a lustful woman. The only way to escape is through Narayana the primordial God, the Unfallen present everywhere as all things and no thing. Give up your asura nature, he says, and show compassion (*daya*) toward all beings. Be sympathetic and friendly and kind to all, for that pleases God, and if you please God, what's out of reach (*BP* 7.6.1–25)? Yet those who truly sing the glory of God's feet do not want to gain anything—not righteousness or even emancipation. The Veda may teach righteousness, prosperity, and pleasure, but its true meaning is dedication of the center of one's consciousness to the Supreme Person. Narayana was himself once a man and taught this Bhagavata Dharma to Narada. "I learned it from Narada" (*BP* 7.6.23–28). (Narayana as a man teaching Narada is depicted below in Panel N2.)

The puzzled students ask how that can be. Only Shukra's sons have taught us, they say. When you were little and lived in the women's quarters you couldn't have have spent time with such a great soul. What do you mean?

Prahlada tells them that when his father went to the sluggish Mount Mandara to perform tapas, Indra led devas in an attack on asuras and they fled. "Indra captured my mother, who was pregnant with me. Indra was leading her away when Narada appeared and urged him to release her because she was innocent. Indra said he would, but only after I had been born and killed. Narada told him that I would be sinless and great among the Bhagavan's great slaves, and this persuaded Indra. He immediately let my mother go, circumambulated her because she was carrying me, and returned home. Narada took my mother to his ashram and she stayed there until my father returned from his great tapas. Narada taught her, but had me in mind as his pupil. My mother later forgot the lessons, but I always remember what I heard while in her womb. Let me tell you what I learned" (paraphrased from *BP* 7.7.1–16).

Frame 5. Narada Teaches Prahlada in the Womb. Prahlada outlines the topics as if for a course of study.[11] "While I was in the womb I heard Narada say that there are six actions of Time on the body and twelve characteristics of the Self (*atman*). Matter is eightfold, with three threads and sixteen evolutes, and the person of consciousness (*purusha*) watches them. There are bodies that move and do not move, and there are three modifications of the intellect (*buddhi*) in waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. But these modifications occur because of intentional actions (*karma*) and ever-moving matter (*prakriti*), not because of the Supreme Person who pervades them all. Ignorance (*ajnana*) falsely identifies the person of pure consciousness with these modifications of the intellect; and this false identification produces the realm of death and birth (*samsara*), which is insubstantial like a dream. Ignorance is the seed of intentional action and must

be destroyed through the unification of consciousness (*yoga*), because yoga ends the flow of thought" (paraphrased from *BP* 7.7.18–28).

Of the thousands of ways to end the flow of thought, he went on, the easiest is the way of the "good person" (*sadhu*), a means the Bhagavan himself teaches. The devotee who follows this path gives devout service to the guru, offers all possessions to God, and associates closely with devotees who are good (*sadhu*). He worships Hari, has faith in his stories, and sings of his qualities and acts. He visualizes his lotus feet to see and venerate his bodies (*linga*). He believes that Hari resides as Ruler in all beings, regards all beings as good (*sadhu*), and gives them whatever they desire.

People may easily begin with the "means of one thousand names" (*upayasahasranamya*), a readily available recitation that leads to other means and to intense pleasure (*rati*) in Vasudeva. This intense pleasure (*rati*) eventually leads to "extingushing in *brahman*" (*brahmanirvana*). Its happiness (*shukha*) may manifest itself vividly in bizarre social behavior, of course, but the devotee is unconcerned with what the world thinks. With single-minded devotion (*bhakti*) he should therefore worship the Ruler who is beyond any fault either seen or heard (*BP* 7.7.29–37).

FRAME 4. PRAHLADA TEACHES THE ASURA STUDENTS. After this summary of Narada's lessions, Prahlada tells the gathered asura boys that Hari is the Ruler and the Beloved (*priya*) of all Selves, whom he embodies with himself. Anyone may be blessed by worshiping the feet of the Giver of Emancipation (Mukunda), whether deva, asura, or human, or even yaksha or gandharva. The highest goal in this world is singular and devout participation (*ekantabhakti*) in Govinda seen everywhere (*BP* 7.7.38–55).

FRAME 3. NARADA TELLS YUDHISHTHIRA THE STORY OF HIRANYAKASHIPU. We return to Narada's narrative at the rajasuya: a few days later Shanda and Amarka note that their innately passionate and deluded students are intently reflective, a rather unusual change, and they tell the king. Trembling with violent rage at his son's behavior, Hiranyakashipu resolves to kill Prahlada and sends for him. Prahlada appears and respectfully stands before his father, who hisses like a snake, "How dare you flout me! Where do you get such audacity?" Prahlada respectfully replies, "It comes from the Bhagavan, because he controls all things as his slaves, from Brahma's realm at the top of the universe all the way down to its bottom." Prahlada pleads with his father to give up his asura nature, because an uncontrolled mind gone astray is the only enemy. Supreme worship of the Bhagavan requires an even and undisturbed mind that perceives no difference between friend and foe. "Some think themselves the conqueror of the ten directions, yet have not even conquered the six enemies within, which are their own five senses and mind" (*BP* 7.8.11). Delight in Krishna could not have pierced his father's heart more skillfully.

Hiranyakashipu is beside himself with rage. "Where is this Ruler of the moving universe you're always talking about?" he roars. "Everywhere," Prahlada replies quietly. "He's in this pillar then?" "Yes, he's there, I see him." "I'm going to cut off your prattling head!" he father screams. "If Hari's your shelter, let *him* protect you if he can." Hiranyakashipu grabs his sword, leaps off the throne, and pounds his fist on the pillar where his son says he sees Hari. Suddenly a terrifying sound loud enough to crack Brahma's sphere thunders, and when Hiranyakashipu looks around to see where it comes from, he sees something that is neither a wild animal nor a human emerge out of the pillar he struck. It is the Indra of men and of wild animals in a single shape, it is a "a lion as man," it is the Man-lion (Narasimha) (*BP* 7.8.18–22).

Hiranyakashipu grabs his mace and rushes at this strange form, and Prahlada watches his father disappear into Narasimha's blaze, just as a moth disappears in a flame. The invincible asura brings his mace down to crush Narasimha with his great strength, but Narasimha seizes him in his claws the way Garuda seizes a snake. He holds him in his blaze and then lets him go. Hiranyakashipu attacks again, this time with his sword and shield, and Narasimha seizes him again, but this time holds him fast (*BP* 7.8.27).

THE PANEL. These two sculpted panels (Figures 8.2 and 8.3) illustrate the two events of the story's climax, and in both cases the viewer stands in the place of Prahlada.

The first and larger panel portrays the moment Narasimha grasps Hiranyakashipu and holds him in his blazing light (Figure 8.4). Narasimha at the center of the panel holds Hiranyakashipu in a posture of graceful violence. The two figures are almost equal in size and posture, and move toward and away from each other simultaneously, but Narasimha has eight arms and Hiranyakashipu has only two. The royally dressed Narasimha faces directly northward, wears a short crown on his lion head, and bares his teeth in a face resembling a Pallava-style lion. His front pair of arms rises up at the sides of his head with claws bared. The figures are badly damaged, but we may assume that his back pair of arms (the second down in the sequence) holds the wheel and conch as in other sculptures. On the west his third left hand grasps the asura's left shoulder from behind, and his fourth left hand is hidden behind the asura. On the east the third right hand stretches below the wheel eastward and holds what is probably the mace; and his fourth right hand at the level of his waist appears to be a closed fist resembling the balimudra or mushtimudra. Narasimha's entire upper body faces north, but his lower body twists westward and his left leg extends downward to bear his weight on the threshold of Indra's palace. Except for the foot, Narasimha's right leg is hidden by the asura's left leg.

Hiranyakashipu's position, though mirroring Narasimha's general outline, reveals his subordination. The lower part of his body faces eastward, his left leg is raised, and Narasimha's grip on his left shoulder twists his upper



FIGURE 8.2. Panel 8: Narasimha grasps Hiranyakashipu. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

body toward the viewer. Hiranyakashipu is crowned and his head tilts westward, away from Narasimha's face at a severe angle. His right arm holds a sword that extends from behind the tip of his crown, but Narasimha's grip renders this arm useless; his left arm stretches down at his left side, but what it holds is not clearly visible.



FIGURE 8.3. Panel 9: Narasimha rips open Hiranyakashipu at his navel. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

The panel's three horizontal sections illustrate this event's cosmic consequences. The figures at the top joyfully watch the struggle from heaven. They are probably Brahma, Indra, and Shiva; the two figures flying at the corners are gandharvas or vidyadharas (bearers of the knowledge of spells). Creatures at the bottom are in the nether worlds and fly away in fear. The two figures fleeing

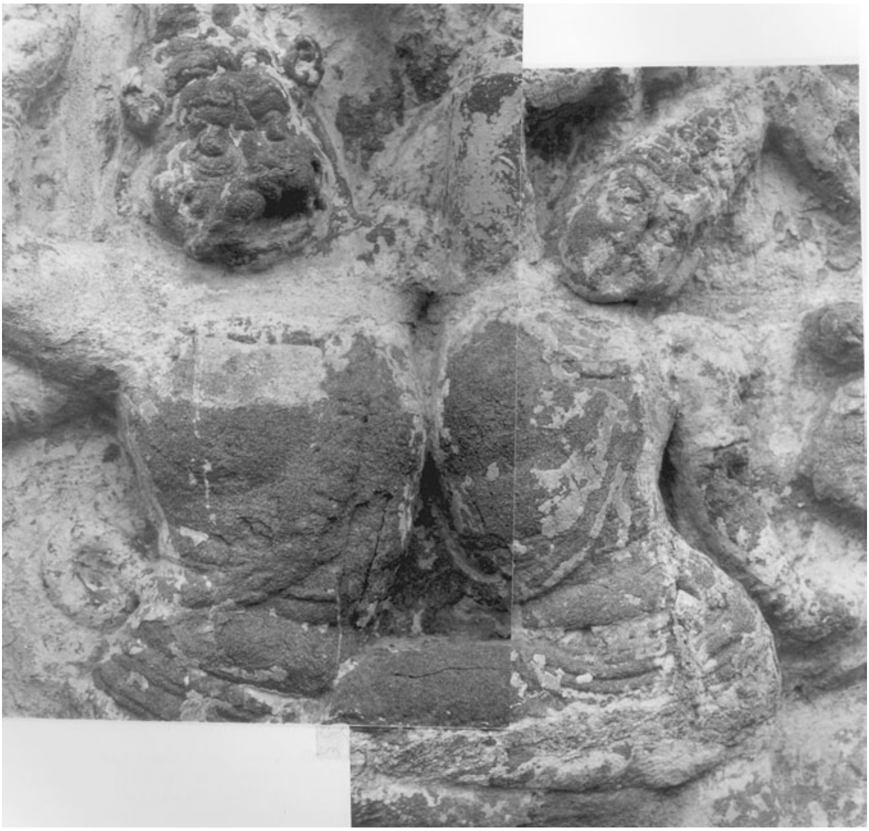


FIGURE 8.4. Narasimha holds Hiranyakashipu (composite, prior to restoration). IFDI.

eastward are asuras known as panis; out of fear of the Bhagavan's wheel and of Vedic mantras, they live in holes like snakes, as the undulating lines of the middle figure suggest (*BP* 5.24.30). The violent forms of Narasimha and Hiranyakashipu fill the space between heaven and the underworld. The small standing figure on the eastern side may be a prajapati, master of progeny. The large female standing on the west is most likely Goddess Shri as Majesty, for she is present at Narasimha's enthronement, but like other devas is afraid to approach him. The female figure standing in the lower region and supporting her is probably Majesty's realm, Goddess Bhumi or Earth; according to an Upanishad discussed below, whenever Narayana appears as Narasimha, Shakti appears as the twofold kriyashakti and bhutishakti. The first corresponds to Goddess Shri and the second to Goddess Bhumi.

The second and smaller panel to the east (Figure 8.5) is divided by a vertical axis, which runs down the left side of Narasimha's head and through the navel of Hiranyakashipu's recumbent body. Two badly damaged figures fly



FIGURE 8.5. Narasimha rips open Hiranyakashipu (prior to repair). IFDI.

in the panel's upper part toward this vertical axis. Narasimha stretches his right leg down to the ground, and rests his left foot on a raised ledge to support the asura's torso with his left leg. He bends slightly toward the asura's body, tilts his crowned head slightly eastward, and opens his mouth to expose a long tooth at each side. His highest pair of hands reveals claws; the next pair holds the conch and wheel; the pair below is difficult to see (the right arm and hand are damaged, and the left arm emerges from behind the asura's raised right arm); and the front pair of hands join at the asura's navel to rip him open at his

center, which is the visual center of the panel. The asura's head in the west falls sideways toward the viewer to reveal his anguished face. His legs in the east dangle uselessly, his limp left arm hangs down below the ledge on which Narasimha's left foot rests, and his raised right arm bending at the elbow disappears eastward into the panel's frame.

THE PANELS' MEANINGS. The first Man-lion panel depicts him holding Hiranyakashipu in his burning blaze; it represents the first sadhana operating at the level of deep sleep (*sushupti*) and signifies part one of the "Secret Teaching about Man-lion's Burning." (An extended discussion of the three sadhanas appears in Appendix 2.) The second Man-lion panel depicts him ripping out the asura's navel center; it represents the second sadhana operating at the level of dreaming sleep (*svapna*) and signifies part two of the "Secret Teaching about Man-lion's Burning." The third and final consecration of the set of three taught by the Plower in the *Satvata-samhita* is "Consecration to the Subtle" (*sukshma-diksha*). Its sadhana leads to the experience of the fourth during waking consciousness (*jagrat*). Krishna dancing on Kaliya in the final north-facing panel represents it, but before we move on, let us briefly pause to examine two important metaphors in the story of Hiranyakashipu: Prahlada as the Handle of Vishnu's Axe and Prahlada as Shunahshepa.

Prahlada's teachers used a thorn bush and an axe to describe the effects he had on asuras. Prahlada, they said, is "the thorn bush born in this sandalwood forest of Diti's sons, whose root (*mula*) is uprooted (*anmula*) by Vishnu's axe (*parashu*) and the little boy is its handle" (*BP* 7.5.17). The metaphor implies a grip made of thorn bush wood (*kantakadruma*) firmly linked to a piece of sharpened iron or stone to serve as a hatchet or axe (*parashu*) for chopping trees at their root. Both the handle and the head of the axe belong to Vishnu. Prahlada is its handle, but what is its sharpened head? The answer is provided by two related stories.

One is the story of Rama of the Axe (Parashurama), which we shall discuss more fully in chapter 15 (Panel S1). This Rama is the youngest son of Jamadagni in the lineage of the seer Bhrigu. His arrogant and excessive opponent is Arjuna Son of Kritavirya, a disciple of Dattatreya. Arjuna resembles the "sandalwood forest" in the metaphor above because he has a thousand arms and ten thousand sons. A single seed had generated a tree that sprouted a forest; Rama uses his axe to fell both tree and forest (*BP* 9.15.34–35; 9.16.16–19). According to the *Satvata-samhita*, Rama of the Axe lived in the Western Ghats of the ancient Dravida kingdoms, where he taught Narada the doctrines and consecrations he had learned from the Plower (*SS* 1; Smith 1975: 515–516). When told in the context of these two Man-lion panels, Rama's story depicts the Plower's omniscience purifying the sadhaka through sadhana.

The second story identifies this omniscience as consciousness without clinging (*asanga*). In the *Bhagavad-gita*'s fifteenth chapter, Krishna teaches

Arjuna Son of Pandu about the hidden dimension of spacetime known through Veda. It appears as a fig tree (*ashvattha*) growing from its root above (*urdhvamula*).[12] Its shape cannot be seen, it has no beginning and no end, and where it dwells is beyond comprehension. Branches nourished by the threads of matter grow beyond and below the root above; sense objects are their twigs and Veda's chants are their leaves. Secondary roots descend as intentional acts and plant themselves in the world of humans. Krishna tells Arjuna, "Chop this fig tree's fatly nourished root with the stout axe of non-clinging, search out that realm (*padam*) from which those who reach it do not return [saying], 'I take refuge in that Person of the Beginning (*adya purusha*) from whom ancient creativity (*pravritti*) emerges.'" He then identifies that realm as his highest home (*BG* 15.1–4; 6).

The instrument (*shastra*) this Arjuna is to use must be an axe because he is to chop the root at the top of the tree. This single root is the source of the entire ashvattha nourished by the sap of passion (*raga*). But to get to it Arjuna must first use nonclinging consciousness to chop at the secondary roots of intentional action (*karma*); Krishna already taught him this in the scripture's first six chapters. This high root (*urdhvamulam*) and its dangling secondary roots (*mulani*) recall the fear voiced by Prahlada's teachers that Vishnu will use him to uproot (*amula*) the root (*mula*) of the asura forest.

Chopping with nonclinging is not sufficient in itself, however, because it may result in knowledge that goes no further than samkhya's discrimination (*viveka*) between the person of perception (*purusha*) and matter (*prakriti*). An autonomous "This am I" can rule the sadhaka for its own interests. But through diksha, delight in Krishna has been born and has purified this ego without its knowledge. All that is required now is for jnana in Man-lion's shape to replace the autonomous ego with delight in Krishna. The sadhaka's delight will then see that the person of consciousness and the matter from which it has been isolated are both contained by God's body.

A second important metaphor in the story of Hiranyakashipu occurs after Hiranyakashipu unsuccessfully tries to kill his son. He grows anxious: "This boy is like Shunahshepa and will not forget what I have done. Will he cause my death?" (*BP* 7.5.45–46). Ominously, Hiranyakashipu recognizes himself in Ajigarta (Nothing to Swallow). This defiled royal Angirasa Brahmin first sold his son to be a victim in Harishcandra's rajasuya, then agreed to slaughter him, and finally lost him to the highly esteemed and pure royal Brahmin named Vishvamitra (Friend to All). The story illustrated by these two Man-lion panels is thus linked to the ceremonial birth of a king, to the release of a son from his deadly father, and to the "death" of the father when an acharya adopts his son as his own.[13] Shunahshepa's adoption is echoed by the acharya's adoption of the sadhaka through the Vyuha-diksha.

Ajigarta in the story represents a "beastly" element still active within the sadhaka's consciousness characterized by hungry desire and cruel violence.

After he played his crucial and violent role in Shunahshepa's story, he disappeared. But the beastliness he represents reappears as the snake Kaliya in the next and final panel, to which we now turn. Shuka tells this story to the emperor Parikshit as he awaits his death by Takshaka's bite, and that biting snake appears here as Kaliya.

Panel 10: Krishna Dances on Kaliya the Snake in a Pool of the Yamuna River

THE STORY. The episode illustrated here begins with a previous story of Garuda and the naga Kaliya (*BP* 10.17.1–12). Shuka explains to Parikshit that the black serpent came to this blackened pond because of a conflict with Garuda who, we recall, embodies the mantras of Veda; this serpent opposes them. His name, Kaliya, refers to time (*kala*) and to blackness (*kala*), both characterstics of the Bhagavan (*BG* 11.32). Moreover, Kaliya came to this pond from the abode of nagas called Ramanaka, an island in the sea that shares with Balarama the word rama or charm; one is Charm's Realm, the other is Charm's Power. The sea as endlessly restless and full of "graspers" is a metaphor for normal waking consciousness. All of these—the sea, its island, its inhabitant Kaliya, and Balarama—-originate in the Plower as Snake sitting in inebriated ease on the sanctum below.

Kaliya embodies the kalakuta spilled from Shiva's cupped hands in the form of kalmasha opposed to Veda in ordinary waking consciousness. Opposition to Veda appears in the story as Kaliya's conflict with Garuda occasioned by a customary ritual on Ramanaka, but caused by Kaliya's excessive pride. People make monthly offerings to snakes at the foot of the tree called Lord of the Forest to avoid their bite. Nagas receive the offerings and offer Garuda a portion of them on each full-moon day. This way they avoid *his* bite. But Kadru's son, Kaliya, was proud of his poison's strength and one day challenged Garuda by eating up the portion set aside for him.

When a person becomes a sadhaka, Veda and Agama begin their purification of consciousness. In the story, when Garuda learned what Kaliya did he flew to Ramanaka to kill him, but the snake fought him with uplifted hoods, frightening tongues, fierce eyes, and poisonous fangs. Nevertheless, Garuda—who after all is the throne of the Slayer of Deluded Passion (Madhusudana)—-smacked Kaliya with his golden left wing. Kaliya trembled with fear and fled to a pool of the Yamuna River, where he knew Garuda could not go. Attacked by Veda, kalmasha fled "inland" to take refuge in the deepest level of consciousness.

Garuda could not go to this Yamuna River pool because of a curse by the seer of the *Rig Veda* named Saubhari.[14] One day, while Saubhari was performing tapas in its waters, Garuda came to catch fish. The seer forbade him, but Garuda was hungry and caught one and ate it. Unfortunately it happened

to be the fishes' master, and they were bereft. Out of compassion for them Saubhari cursed Garuda: "If he ever enters the area and catches fish he will instantly die." Kaliya was the only serpent who knew about this curse, which is why he went there for refuge and took up residence in a deep underwater cavern (*BP* 10.16.63). His presence was so deadly that not only was the Yamuna's pure water poisoned but birds flying overhead would also fall dead, and the surrounding vegetation and animals would perish whenever touched by drops of its water blown by the wind (*BP* 10.16.4–12).

One hot summer's day, Krishna goes without Balarama to Vrinda's Forest with his cowherd friends (*BP* 10.15.47–52). The cowherd friends are thirsty from the heat and take their cattle to this Yamuna river pool, not knowing that it is poisoned. They wash their faces and mouths and promptly fall dead. But Krishna, who is the Ruler of Yoga's Ruler, revives them with the amrita of his glance.[15] The cowherds sit up, look at each other in wonder, and realize that Govinda's gracious glance has brought them back to life.

Krishna, the Lord who is black, knows that the black river is poisoned because of the black snake hiding there from Garuda, and resolves to purify the Yamuna water (*BP* 10.16).[16] He girds his loins, slaps his biceps, climbs a kadamba tree, and jumps into the pool, splashing water the distance of a hundred bows. Krishna smiles as he plays in the water. But Kaliya suddenly emerges from the depths and sees him who has the Shrivatsa on his chest, wears a yellow cloth, has feet like lotuses, and skin dark as a rain cloud—and bites him. He winds Krishna in his coils until Gopala completely disappears. The cowherds on the bank, watching all this, collapse from grief and fear, and their cattle bellow. Omens of danger appear everywhere. Nanda and others in Gokula see these omens, and knowing that Balarama did not go with Krishna, fear that Krishna might be dying. Anxious and pathetic they set out to find him, like cows searching for lost calves, following his footprints with their emblems of lotus, barley grain, goad, thunderbolt, and flag. Balarama watches and keeps quiet, chuckling to himself, for he knows his brother's prowess.[17]

They reach the pond and are stunned by a horrifying sight: the snake has enveloped Krishna, who does not move, and his cowherd friends lie unconscious amid bellowing cattle. Yashoda wants to go into the water after her son, but the other women hold her back. Nanda and the other men try to do the same, but Balarama restrains them. After an hour, Krishna acknowledges their distress and swells his body until Kaliya is forced to loosen his coils. But the snake then spreads out his hoods, hisses and spits poison, and stares at Krishna's face with hot unmoving eyes. Krishna encircles Kaliya in the way Garuda encircles his prey, and the serpent twists, keeping his eyes fixed him as his forked tongue licks the corners of his mouth and spits fiery poison. Eventually, however, Kaliya begins to grow weary, and Krishna makes his move: He pushes the snake's head down, mounts his broad hood studded with jewels, and to music sounding from Heaven begins to dance as the First Teacher of All the

Arts (*BP* 10.16.26). Each time Krishna stamps down on Kaliya's 101 hoods, the snake's many nostrils and mouths spit blood as beings gather in the sky, and on the banks of the pool gopas worship Krishna as the Ancient Male. Kishna's wondrously violent dance crushes Kaliya's heads, forcing him to remember Narayana, the Ancient Person, the guru of all that moves and does not move. And with this memory Kaliya mentally takes refuge in Him.

Kaliya's wives, who watch the One who carries the moving universe as an embryo crush their husband, approach Krishna with their children. They prostrate themselves before him as refugees seeking protection from him who gives refuge.[18] They then recite a long prayer which falls into three parts: acceptance, veneration, and petition. Like most prayers in the stories illustrated by the temple, the prayer Kaliya's wives make to Krishna provides information crucial for interpreting both panel and story. Tradition divides it into three parts.[19]

Part One: Kaliya's wives first accept the justice of his punishment and view it in fact as a privilege:

> This, your punishment, is the grace that removes all defilement from those who are untrue. Our husband, embodied as a snake, has received grace in the form of your anger, which must result from great tapas performed in previous lives, or from acts of dharma performed for others, which please you who exist in all souls. Goddess Shri herself performed lengthy tapas and severe vows for the privilege of bearing the dust of your feet.[20] Refugees at your feet desire nothing more, neither heaven, nor lordship of earth, nor the position of Brahma, nor the rule of Rasatala, nor the siddhis of yoga—-not even the end of rebirth. This lord of serpents is of wrathful disposition and born of darkness, but now he possesses what is desired by those who are embodied and whirling in the wheel of samsara.

Part Two: Kaliya's wives now venerate Krishna as the Bhagavan and the Purusha, as the transcendent and supreme atman residing in all beings as inner controller, and as Time the external controller and witness of all. They venerate the four formations: first Krishna, then Rama who is "extracted" from Vasudeva, and then Pradyumna and Aniruddha as masters of the Satvatas.[21] Krishna, they say, is Time who brings forth, sustains, and dissolves the universe; and is the Bhagavan who is simultaneously the universe and its witness.

Part Three: Finally, Kaliya's wives ask Krishna to be gracious to their husband before he dies. "Women deserve the pity of 'good people' (*sadhu*). Our husband is the breath of our lives. Tell us what we should do for you, because one who obeys you with faith (*shraddha*) is free from all fear." Krishna responds graciously and releases their naga husband. Kaliya, breathing with difficulty, forms the anjalimudra and says to Krishna: "We snakes are a ferocious group you created; how can we overcome your maya by ourselves? You

rule the moving universe, you know all things, and you may bestow your grace or withhold it as you see fit." Krishna responds graciously once again: "You must leave this river and return to the sea. Anyone who remembers this episode and sings of it at the twilights need not fear you. Whoever fasts and bathes here where I have played, worships devas with libations of water, and worships me with unbroken concentration will be freed of all sins. Go back to Ramanaka. Garuda will not harm you, for my footprint is now on your head." Kaliya and his wives give Krishna gifts, worship him, circumambulate him, and Krishna gives them leave to return to Ramanaka in the sea. The pool of Yamuna water is now as pure as amrita.

THE PANEL. The panel depicts the moment Kaliya and his wives take refuge in Krishna (Figure 8.6). The viewer stands in the place of the cowherds watching the scene from the bank. Krishna with two arms entirely fills the panel as he dances on the snake. His right leg stretches downward to the lower eastern corner, and his right foot stands on Kaliya's body. The diagonal from this corner at the lower east to the corner at the upper west runs through Krishna's right foot, right leg, chest, and left arm to his left hand holding Kaliya's tail, its end dangling. Krishna's torso and crowned head face directly north toward the viewer, and his head tilts eastward with an expression of pleasure. His right hand at the center of his lower chest appears to form the ankushamudra, which Lakshmana forms in Panel 6 (chapter 7): the back of the hand faces the viewer, his forefinger bends like a hook, and his other three fingers curl slightly (*PS* 41).

Kaliya's crowned head, with hoods behind it, appears just below Krishna's upraised right knee. The details of Kaliya's figure have been erased by damage, but his tail stretches upward along the panel's western side. On the eastern side Krishna pins down his body with his right foot, pulls his tail up on the western side, and leaves Kaliya's hooded head and arms free to pay him homage. His head and torso parallel the diagonal of Krishna's raised right shin as Kaliya forms the anjalimudra directed toward Krishna's right foot. A female figure forms the anjalimudra directly below Krishna's axial center; she is Kaliya's chief wife and represents all the others as they praise Krishna and pray for the sake of their husband.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. First, this panel uses the Yamuna pool of water to represent the final level of the sadhaka's consciousness, the sheath made of joy. Elements in the story suggest that the cowherds (in whose place the viewer stands) represent a dimension within the sadhaka witnessing Krishna purify the deepest level of his own consciousness, represented by the pool. Krishna at the pool is repeatedly said to be the cowherds' "breath of life" (*prana*). When he disappears into Kaliya's coils, the cowherds collapse on the bank of the pool, some unconscious and others riveted with attention, like the bodily organs of



FIGURE 8.6 Panel 10: Krishna dances on Kaliya the snake in a pool of the Yamuna River. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

the bhakti-yogin on the way to samadhi. When Kaliya is banished from this domain of deep consciousness back to the surface of waking consciousness where he belongs, he is a devotee protected by Krishna's footprint on his head. When the victorious Krishna comes out of the amrita-pure water, the cowherds come to life and center themselves joyfully in him, as if they are performing puja to him as an icon.

Second, the panel depicts kalmasha resident in this sheath made of joy, in the form of the snake Kaliya. Kalmasha poisons the material thread of passion (*rajoguna*) and causes it to produce desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*), and they cause a person to do evil (*papa*) even against his or her intention (*BG* 3.36–43). Kalmasha at this level of consciousness is beyond the reach of the Veda, for even though Garuda is made of Vedic mantras he cannot approach this pool and remove Kaliya's defilement. Only Krishna can do that.

This pool in the final panel of the northern side also alludes to the pool in the first panel through a visual play on the homonym *naga*, which denotes both a snake and an elephant. This homonymic use of *naga* identifies "beastly" ignorance with two shapes. The naga Gajendra at the beginning of this northern side is carnal lust in the gross body, in the superficial sheath made of food. The naga Kaliya is poisonous kalmasha in the deepest level of consciousness, in the sheath made of joy. Further, Krishna's ankushamudra identifies him as the "grasper of the hook" (*ankushagraha*), the mahout. He is in charge of the naga elephant in Varuna's pond at the northwest corner where night's final hour begins, and he is in charge of the naga snake at this northeast corner where night's final hour ends.

This panel subtly alludes to Shiva's subordinate status in relation to Krishna by means of the snake and his venomous kalmasha. Shiva's blue throat signifies his compassion, for out of his desire to serve Narayana this "Ruler of Yoga" keeps kalakuta's death in his throat like a snake. But here Narayana as the "Ruler of the Ruler of Yoga" dances away the remainder that dripped from Shiva's hands. Shiva is famous for his violent tandava dance under a banyan tree. As he dances, the story says, the king of snakes named Karkotaka darts at his leg and Shiva immediately assumes the "snake-fright posture" (*bhujamgatrasa*). The Pallava king Mahendravarman depicted this event in the cave-temple built at Siyamangalam in the seventh century (Srinivasan 1964: 92; Pl. XXIII; Zvelibil 1985: 7–8). In contrast to Shiva, however, when the ferocious Kaliya attacks, Krishna does not assume a posture of fright, but lets Kaliya envelop him until it is time to swell up and break his grip. And then Krishna mounts Kaliya's many hoods, dances his wondrously violent tandava, and leaves his footprint on the snake's head to protect nagas from Garuda, and to remind sadhakas that he protects them from venomous kalmasha. Krishna's foot solves the problem left by Shiva when his neck turned blue.

Furthermore, this panel depicts the content of omniscient knowledge when the deepest sheath of consciousness is purified. The content is Gopala

Krishna. But what happens to the devotee who approaches this level of purification? Krishna says he approaches "extinction in *brahman*" (*brahmainirvana*): "His pleasure within, his joy within, his light within, he with consciousness unified becomes *brahman* and approaches extinction in *brahman*. Seers in whom kalmasha is destroyed attain brahmanirvana: Their doubts dispelled, their self in control, they take pleasure in friendliness toward all beings. Brahmanirvana revolves on all sides of these people of restrained senses and controlled thoughts, who are unlinked from desire and anger, and know the atman" (*BG* 5.24–25). To know the atman, moreover, is to know Vasudeva Krishna, for he *is* one's atman (*BP* 11.13.27–29; 14.45). This episode makes the same point, for when Krishna emerges from the purified pond he wears the jewels and gifts given by Kaliya's wives, decorated like a material form (*murti*) dressed for puja worship. The cowherds now see who Gopala Krishna truly is and receive him accordingly (*BP* 11.18.13–19).

Nevertheless, their awakened knowledge of Krishna remains subject to the darkness inherent to the body, as events during the night illustrate. The hungry and tired cowherds spend the night on the riverbank with their cattle (*BP* 10.17.20–25). While they are sleeping a forest fire breaks out and surrounds them. They wake in alarm and seek refuge in Krishna, for now they know he is the Ruler born as a human through maya: "O Krishna, Krishna, great beyond measure, Dear One of unlimited prowess, we're yours, but the mouth of this fierce fire of darkness (*tamas*) will consume us. Protect us from the Fire of Time. We seek refuge at your feet where there is no fear." The Ruler of the Moving Universe sees their helplessness and drinks up the fire, for He is Ananta; the Infinite has infinite potency.

The cowherds of this final panel take refuge from the dark Fire of Time, just as Gajendra of the initial panel takes refuge from carnal desire. But there is a crucial difference between the beginning and the end. Gajendra mentally seeks refuge from ignorance after a thousand years of struggle with carnal passion only because he remembers teachings from his previous life as a Pandya king. These cowherds, however, instantly take refuge from dark Fire of Time because they perceive Krishna's true identity. This is the simple difference between the beginning and the ending of the "waking up" process represented by these six panels facing north: At the beginning one takes refuge from the long struggle with delusion because one has heard of God or remembers God. But at the end one instantly takes refuge from the sudden eruption of the dark Fire of Time because one knows and sees God. And this is because God graciously revealed Himself in the waters of consciousness He purified.

Krishna continues to reveal himself to the cowherds after this episode until he and Balarama leave for Mathura in Akrura's chariot, which the next panel on the eastern side depicts (Panel 11, discussed in chapter 6). Between dancing on Kaliya's head and departing for Mathura, Krishna does the following;

1) slays the asura Pralamba (*BP* 10.18); 2) swallows a forest fire (10.19); 3) dances as a peacock playing the flute (10.21); 4) steals the gopis' clothes (10.22); 5) lifts Govardhana and receives the title Govinda (10.24–27); 6) reveals to gopas his realm beyond darkness (10.28); 7) dances the rasalila with the gopis (10.29–33); 8) transforms Sudarshana and destroys Shankhachuda (10.34); 9) kills Arishta, an asura in the shape of a bull (10.36); 10) slaughters Keshin, an asura in the shape of a horse (10.37.1–9); and 11) slays Vyoma, an asura in the shape of a gopa (10.37.27–34).

In other words, the entire span of the Krishna Story from the Kaliya episode until the Keshi and Vyoma episodes is represented by this sanctum's northeast corner of sunrise. This final panel, in which Krishna faces north as he dances on the head of the serpent Kaliya, condenses *all* of this knowledge of Krishna; it depicts the content of jnana seen by the sadhaka who truly is "awake."

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9

The Middle-Floor Sanctum

The Sculpted Program of the Southern Path

The southern sequence of the middle-floor sanctum begins on the west, at the southwest corner of the porch facing south. It moves counterclockwise to the eastern side, ending with the panel adjacent to its central window. Figure 6.3 identifies its twelve panels (13–24). As in the case of the northern sequence, we shall discuss this sculpted program beginning with the western side (panels 13–16), moving directly to the eastern side (panels 23–24). The southern side (panels 17–22) will be discussed in chapter 10.

Western Panels of the Southern Path

Panel 13: The Murti Hrishikesha

The southern sequence begins at the porch's northwest corner with the tenth murti, named Hrishikesha (Ruler of the Senses), standing on a lotus, facing south (Figure 9.1). He has two pairs of arms. The back pair holds the conch in the left hand and the wheel in the right; the latter appears to be held with its rim facing the viewer in the position of a missile, prayogachakra. He rests his front left hand on his hip, and raises up his front forearm, but its hand has broken off; it perhaps formed the abhayamudra of protection implied by the wheel behind it. This panel introduces the theme of protection, raksha, by means of mantras used as arrows, astra, deployed in ritual performance or kriya.



FIGURE 9.1. Panel 13: The murti Hrishikesha (prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1990.

Panel 14: Vamana the Dwarf at Bali's Horse Sacrifice

THE STORY. The second panel on the porch begins with four depictions of the story of Vishnu when he took the form of a dwarf, Vamana, to conquer the asura king Bali (*BP* 8.15–23). Bali's name means "powerful" (*balin*) and "offering" (*bali*), and both meanings drive the plot of his story. Bali is the son of Virochana (Illuminating) and the grandson of Prahlada (Delight), whom we met in the story of Narasimha and Hiranyakashipu (Panels 8 and 9 in chapter 8). After churning the Milk Ocean, Indra and Bali fought over the amrita and Indra won. The injured Bali retreated to the western mountain, entered the dark waters beneath earth, and his acharya Shukra (Resplendent or Venus), the leader of the Bhrigu clan of Brahmins, healed him.

Bali's asura nature is to conquer devas, and he wants Shukra and other Bhrigus to consecrate him into universal sovereignty (*samraj*). Under Shukra's direction, Bali sponsors the All-Conquering (*vishvajita*) sacrifice, which requires him to give everything away. Out of its fire he receives a golden chariot yoked to horses with a flag bearing a lion emblem, an inexhaustible quiver, and a set of armor. Prahlada gives his grandson an unfading garland of flowers, and Shukra gives him a conch. Bali then receives the Great Unction (*mahabhisheka*), for he intends to usurp Indra's throne eastward in Devadhani on the seventh continent Pushkara; this is where his grandfather Prahlada long ago watched Narasimha slay his father Hiranyakashipu on the mountain Boundary of the Mind. Bali arrives with his troops at Devadhani and blows Shukra's conch to begin their attack.

Indra's acharya is Brihaspati (Master of Prayer or Jupiter). He tells Indra that Shukra has had the Bhrigus impart their *brahman* nature to Bali and no one can defeat him except the Bhagavan. Indra flees Devadhani, and with his ten brothers takes refuge in the ashram of their parents, Kashyapa and Aditi. Bali occupies Devadhani. An asura of brahman nature is now the universal sovereign of the three worlds of death and birth. To secure this position he resolves to sponsor one hundred horse sacrifices. Shukra begins them and, like the moon, Bali's tejas illuminates the world.

In the meantime, Aditi, daughter of Daksha (Dexterous in Sacrifice) asks her husband Kashyapa (Black-teeth or Tortoise) to restore their sons to Heaven. Kashyapa is a mind-born son of Brahma's son Marici (Light Ray) and one of the Seven Rishis of this seventh Manu Term (depicted opposite this panel by Panel 2). Kashyapa tells her to seek refuge in the Supreme Person Janardana (Who Agitates People), the guru of the moving universe, the all-pervading Vasudeva dwelling in the secret place (*guhavasam*) of all living beings (*BP* 8.16.20). For this worship he teaches her the Milk Vow (*payovrata*), which his grandfather Brahma had taught; it is the essence of all sacrifices, of all vows, of austerity, and of ritual giving (*BP* 8.16.24–57). She is to observe it with Vasudeva in mind for thirteen days during the light half of Phalguna, the final month of the year, with the twelve-syllable mantra *Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya* (*Om*, veneration to the blessed Vasudeva). Aditi observes this Milk Vow and on the thirteenth day attains the unified consciousness called samadhi, which is focused on Vasudeva. He soon appears to her in a form with four arms holding the conch, wheel, and mace, and wearing a yellow cloth. A portion of Him will be born as her son, He tells her, and she is to imagine that this portion dwells within her husband. Kashyapa, who is also in samadhi, sees a portion of Hari enter him. When he emerges from samadhi he inseminates Aditi with the potent seed (*virya*) produced by his prolonged tapas. Then Brahma, known as Golden Embryo (Hiranyagarbha), praises her embryo with six secret names. The first of these is Prishnigarbha, which means Embryo of the Dappled One and Ray of Light (*BP* 8.17.25–28).[1]

The name Prishnigarbha has a tripartite secret (*BP* 10.3.32–45). Prishni first lived in the previous sarga of Svayambhuva with a master of progeny (*prajapati*) named Sutapa, and their duty was to propagate. She performed extrodinarily severe tapas focused on the Bhagavan for 12,000 deva years, and he appeared to her and granted a son. He then entered through Sutapa into Prishni's womb as embryo (*garbha*) and was born as Prishnigarbha; this portion of Vasudeva is also known as Jayanta (Victorious). Prishni was born a second time as Aditi, and Sutapa was born as the master of progeny named Kashyapa. Jayanta Prishnigarbha was born to them again, this time as a Brahmin dwarf. Prishni was born for a third time as Devaki, and Sutapa was born as Vasudeva. Jayanta Prishnigarbha was born to them yet again, this time as Krishna. The secret meaning of the name Prishnibgarbha, therefore, is that he is the portion of Vasudeva (*vasudeva-amsha*) named Jayanta who appeared as two humans: first as a Brahmin and then as a Kshatriya. The one implies the other, but they are not equivalent, because the Brahmin Dwarf embodies a portion of Vasudeva while the Kshatriya Krishna embodies the whole of him.

About six months after the month of Phalguna, in the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada, on the twelfth day known as Victory (*vijayadvadashi*), during the eighth hour called Victorious (*abhijit*), Aditi gives birth to the twelfth and greatest of her sons. He has a dark blue form with four arms holding a conch, discus, lotus, and mace, and wears a yellow cloth. Once Aditi and Kashyapa have seen him, he changes like an actor into the guise of the Brahmin dwarf (Vamana) known as Younger-to-Indra or Upendra.

After his birth ceremonies Upendra is consecrated a celibate student (*brahmacharin*). The devas give Dwarf a sacred thread, a grass girdle, the skin of a black deer, a staff, a loin cloth, an umbrella, a water vessel, kusha grass, a string of beads, and a begging bowl. The Mother (*uma*), as Shiva's faithful wife, gives him his first alms. Dwarf lights his first fire and for the first time offers the required ghee-dipped twigs as an oblation. When he learns that at this very moment Bali is performing a horse sacrifice on the northern bank of the Narmada River called Bhrigu's Shore (*bhrigukaccha*), he decides to walk there for more alms (*BP* 8.18).

When this Brahmin Dwarf enters the sacrificial arena, his tejas immediately brings all to their feet. Bali receives Vamana hospitably and offers him whatever he wants. This pleases Vamana, who praises Bali and his asura lineage for their generosity and bravery. He mentions the difficulty Vishnu had when as Boar he conquered his ancestor Hiranyaksha, and he praises the greatness of Bali's grandfather Prahlada.

Vamana also explains why Prahlada's father, Hiranyakashipu, thought his son should worship him rather than Vishnu. After Vishnu had destroyed Hiranyaksha, the enraged Hiranyakashipu vowed to avenge his younger brother's death. Vishnu realized that the asura would pursue him relentlessly and decided to hide in the asura's own heart, for he knew Hiranyakashipu

always looked outward to the objects of his senses and would never think to look inward. Vishnu made himself tiny, and Hiranyakashipu unknowingly inhaled him through his nose. Since Hiranyakashipu could not find Vishnu anywhere he concluded that he was dead, and that he, Hiranyakashipu, was now the only one to be worshiped.

Vamana also praises Bali's father Virochana (and this is the little we know of Virochana from the *Bhagavata Purana*). Among Prahlada's sons, he says, Virochana was wise and devoted to Brahmins. He gave his life to people dressed as Brahmins, even though he knew they were actually devas in disguise (*BP* 8.19.14–15). It pleases Vamana that Virochana's son, Bali, follows the same dharma. (Significantly, Vamana hints that Bali knows that he is Vishnu disguised, and will knowingly give him the three worlds of death and birth.)

Vamana asks Bali for alms: a strip of land he can measure in three strides. Bali is surprised. Thinking that this small request is due to youthful inexperience, he urges Vamana to ask for more. But Vamana says that anyone not satisfied with three feet of ground will not be satisfied even with all nine regions of Jambu, and will want the other six continents too. He cites the examples of other rulers who always longed for more, beginning with the first king Prithu (subject of Panel 17 discussed in chapter 10). Freedom from rebirth comes from contentment with what one gets by chance, Vamana says; wealth brings happiness only if it is just enough to meet one's needs. "With just three steps I shall fulfill all I have resolved to do." Bali laughs. "Take as much as you want," he says as he prepares to formalize the rite of giving his vowed gift called dana.

But Shukra issues a grave warning to his disciple: "This dwarf is the Bhagavan as Vishnu, and his feet will stride three times to fulfill your dana. In the first stride his foot will step across Earth, measuring all of her. In the second stride his foot will step upward, measuring all the Heavens. But in the third stride there will be no place left for the step of his foot, nothing left for it to measure. This failure of your vowed dana will lead you at death into purgatory (*naraka*)." He then tells his disciple how to handle his wealth as a world ruler:

> You should not give dana that will jeopardize your own livelihood. The householder is obligated to divide wealth in five ways: between acts for religion (*dharma*), acts for fame, acts for economic gain, acts for pleasure, and acts for the benefit of one's family. When you are true (*satya*) to the obligation of giving, you say "Yes" (*om*) to the request. When you are not true (*anrita*) to the obligation of giving, you say "No" (*na*) to the request. But to be true by saying, "Yes, I will give," requires that one is also not-true by saying "No, I will not give away everything." You cannot give away everything because

> you must fulfill the other four obligations as well as this one. You must therefore limit your dana and in this regard be "not-true" in order to give dana and be "true." Being "untrue" by limiting dana preserves and increases wealth.
>
> You have agreed to give three feet of land and if you now break this agreement you will indeed be "untrue." But it is permitted to be "untrue" when it is a matter essential to the quality of life. There are seven such situations: when courting women, when joking, when arranging a marriage, when prosperity is at stake, when escaping death, when protecting a cow or a Brahmin, and when there is violence. (*BP* 8.19.38–43)

But Bali disagrees with his acharya.

> How can I betray my word to a Brahmin, for as Goddess Earth said, "There is no greater unrighteousness than being untrue. I can bear anyone but a liar." Nothing is more frightening to me than cheating or disappointing a Brahmin. Why give a partial gift to a Brahmin when you can give it all? After all, Dadhichi gave his body to devas to make Indra's vajra from his bones, King Shibi gave his body to feed a hawk and save a dove, and many give their bodies on the battlefield. Yet when a tirtha worthy to receive gifts approaches, few people give with faith.[2] Whether you offer this horse sacrifice to Vishnu or to an enemy, I shall give him the land he desires. Even if he were to tie me up, I would not harm him, for out of fear he dresses as a Brahmin. If he is truly Uttamashloka he will not want to give up his fame by killing me and seizing Earth through deceit, nor lie on the battlefield struck down by me. (*BP* 8.20.4–13)

"Soon you shall lose both wealth and fame," Shukra responds in anger. Nevertheless, Bali pours water into Vamana's right hand to confirm the gift. His wife Vindhyavali places a golden jar of consecrated water before him. Bali washes Vamana's feet with the water and sprinkles the remainder on his own head. Flowers fall from Heaven, music resounds, and divine singers praise the great asura king Bali as he knowingly gives the three worlds to his enemy.

The Panel. Three standing figures with one pair of arms each face forward, intent on Vamana's small figure slightly to the east of center (Figure 9.2). Bali, royally dressed and crowned, fills nearly half the panel on the west. With the anjalimudra of veneration he bends forward toward Vamana, and his crowned head marks the panel's vertical axis. He bears his weight on his straight left leg and his left hip thrusts westward. Above and behind Bali's right shoulder is the head and neck of a horse, the victim in the sacrifice. Directly above Bali's head is the priest who will dismember the horse with a golden sword after it has

been strangled; he kneels facing the horse, his left knee and foot on the ground, and with both hands holds the sword vertically in front of him as he bends his head of matted hair in veneration. This spatial arrangement identifies Bali, the patron of the sacrifice, with his animal substitute, the horse. The smaller Shukra, a Brahmin acharya whose hair appears to be piled on his head, stands to Bali's left. He bends slightly to Vamana, but turns his face toward Bali as if explaining the mistake he is about to make. To emphasize his argument visually, Shukra raises his open right hand to the level of Bali's face and with his left hand gestures toward Vamana.



FIGURE 9.2. Panel 14: Vamana the Dwarf at Bali's horse sacrifice (prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1990.

Vamana the Dwarf stands in front of Sukra's left leg, so short that his head reaches only to the acharya's stomach. He faces forward as he stretches his right arm across Shukra's right leg, but his hand at the level of Shukra's knee is damaged. With his left hand he holds the umbrella pole at his large belly; it stretches up and across his left shoulder, with its open umbrella left of his head.

Behind Shukra on the panel's eastern side stands the royal figure of Bali's grandfather, Prahlada. He is close to Bali's height, but less bulky. His left arm is broken off, but his visible left hand forms a mudra in front of his left breast that is difficult to read. Above Prahlada's head is the head of a ram; he is the goat required for the five-day soma sacrifice of which this elaborate horse sacrifice is a part. His omentum is to be offered to Soma and Agni on the fourth day.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the murti Shridhara, the Bearer of Majesty, the ninth interior formation. It also begins the story of Bali and Vamana, which continues with two panels on the sanctum, and ends below with Panel SP2 discussed in chapter 12.

Brahma's praise of the embryo in Aditi's womb with secret names introduces the secret connection of Vamana to Krishna. The first of these six secret names is Prishnigarbha, and we learn who he is from the story of Krishna's birth (*BP* 10.3.32–46). God Vasudeva is born to Vasudeva and Devaki as dark-skinned, dressed in yellow, with four arms holding the wheel, conch, mace, and lotus. Before He changes shape to that of a human baby He explains to Devaki and Vasudeva that this is His third birth with the same shape and with the same parents (see above). In sum, Vamana and Krishna are directly linked, for both are Prishnigarbha reborn. Vamana implies Krishna, and Krishna implies Vamana.

The southern sequence makes this connection visually. The story of Bali and Vamana concludes at the southwest corner with Panel 16. Krishna appears at the southeast corner in Panel 23. As we know from the northern sequence, the corner panel of the sanctum's western side continues with the corner panel of its eastern side. This means that the depiction of the murti Trivikrama as Narayana protecting Bali in Sutala leads directly to the depiction of Krishna slaying Kamsa. The connections between these two seemingly disparate episodes are explained by the panels between them, which face south and are discussed in chapter 10.

Finally, the story of Bali and Vamana is used as an analogy for the relationship of Nandivarman Pallavamalla to his acharya during a ceremony performed for the sake of his sovereignty (*aishvarya*). This ceremony takes place after Nandivarman received the consecration represented by the panels depicting Ashtabhujaswami and Krishna slaying Keshi of the northern sequence (as discussed in chapters 6 and 7; the rituals are discussed in Appendix 2).

This second ceremony is represented by the next two panels, which depict Trivikrama with eight arms and Narayana protecting Bali in Sutala. In this analogy, Bali represents Nandivarman and Vamana represents his acharya. We may distinguish five areas of correspondence:

1. Bali and Nandivarman share an analogous ritual status; asuras are analogous to Shudras, and Nandivarman is a Shudra king according to the *Laws of Manu*: He is a Malla and a Dravida, and both Mallas and Dravidas once were Kshatriyas, but now are Shudras (*Manu* 10.23, 43–44).
2. Bali has a brahmin nature imparted to him by the Bhrigus, and owns the whole world. Analogously, Nandivarman has been consecrated according to the rites of the northern sequence, and owns the entire Pallava realm.
3. Bali is devoted to Brahmins and to Vishnu. So is Nandivarman.
4. Bali knows that in the context of his sacrifice, Vishnu is disguised as Vamana. Nandivarman similarly knows that in the context of his sacrifice, Vishnu is disguised as his acharya.
5. Vishnu disguised as a Brahmin called Uttamashloka receives Bali's promised gift—the entire world. Similarly, Vishnu "disguised" as the Brahmin acharya receives Nandivarman's promised gift—the entire Pallava realm.

This analogy between Bali and Nandivarman, and between Vamana and the acharya, continues in the next two panels, Panels 15 and 16.

Panel 15: Vamana the Dwarf as Trivikrama the Thrice-strider

The Story. As soon as Bali pours water onto Vamana's feet, the latter expands to reveal all of space-time and its inhabitants within his form (*BP* 8.20–23). With him are eight weapons (wheel, bow, conch, mace, sword, scabbard or shield, and two quivers); his attendants are led by Sunanda, the eldest of Brahma's four sons known as Kumaras, which means "sons" and "princes," and all the world protectors of the cardinal and intermediate directions. Vamana stands wearing a shining crown, armlets, fish-shaped earrings, the Shrivatsa on his chest, the Kaushtubha gem at his throat, a girdle, a yellow garment, and a fragrant garland of flowers. With his first stride he encompasses the whole of Earth's realm, his body fills the sky, and his arms fill the directions. With his second stride he encompasses all of the space above. No room is left for his promised third stride, for his foot transverses the realms above Dhruvam and goes beyond the Tapas realm, above the Mahar and Jana realms, and into the highest realm of Satya, where Brahma and others go to receive it. To venerate Trivikrama's foot, Brahma pours water from his pot over it, and this water becomes the Ganga flowing down to purify Heaven, Earth, and the underworld Rasa (*BP* 8.21.1–4).[3]

Suddenly Vamana resumes his small form standing on Bhrigu's Shore. Brahma and others celebrate a great festival of joyous music filling the universe, but the asuras are furious at this deceitful strategy. The Bhagavan appeared as a celibate Brahmin student because it entitled him to alms, they say, and he appeared during this horse sacrifice because he knew its sponsor's vow guaranteed that he would give alms, keep his word, and not be violent. The asuras attack the celebrants with spears and sharp-edged bars of metal, but Vishnu's attendants laughingly begin to slay them until Bali, remembering Shukra's words, "Soon you shall lose your wealth and glory," orders his asuras to retreat. "In the past the Bhagavan favored us and now he favors them. Nothing can defeat Time. We shall wait until fate (*daiva*) turns in our favor." His obedient asuras withdraw to the dark waters under Earth.

In the meantime the sacrificial goat escapes. Since the goat substitutes for the patron and is required to complete the ceremony, Garuda binds Bali with Varuna's rope and ties him to the sacrificial post (*yupa*).[4] This alarms everyone. Vamana now addresses Bali as the victim of his own sacrifice: "Where's the place for the third stride you gave me? You can't give what you promised, so you'll go to purgatory. When you said 'I give' you were proud of your riches, but now you'll feel what it means to lie." Threatened with slaughter, Bali, who cannot move but can speak, appeals to Vamana:

> O Uttamashloka Bhagavan, though you regard my promise as false, I am true to my word. Please place your third footstep on my head. Nothing frightens me more than an unrighteous teaching, and punishment by the most renowned of persons is the best of all; not even a mother, father, brother, or friend can give it. You are our supreme teacher in the guise of an enemy, for when you conquer us you reveal our blind asura pride and arrogance. Many receive success (*siddhi*) through a consciousness unified exclusively by deep hatred of you. You destroy us, yet my grandfather Prahlada found refuge at your feet. I am fortunate because wealth keeps people from facing death's certainty, and you have taken mine away. And now fate (*daiva*) has brought me here to you. (*BP* 8.22.2–11)

As Shuka observes elsewhere, after Bali is bound with Varuna's rope he is alone within himself, as if shut up in a mountain cave. There he reflects on the pettiness of Indra and Brihaspati, who use the Bhagavan to retrieve kingship and its wealth, which last only one Manu Term. In contrast, his grandfather Prahlada renounced such power and status in favor of service at Hari's feet. Bali knows, however, that he cannot do the same without personal experience (*anubhava*) of the Bhagavan (*BP* 5.24.23–26).

Bali's grandfather Prahlada now appears, brilliantly black and dressed in yellow. He approaches his grandson, who bows his head in veneration, and then prostrates at Vamana's feet in the presence of Sunanda, Nanda, and the

others. "You gave Bali the position of Indra and have taken it away," he says, "all for his good because wealth is deluding, even for the learned. I venerate you as Lord of the Moving Universe, and as Narayana its Witness." Bali's wife Vindhyavali now bows down and addresses Indra's younger brother: "You create these three worlds out of your own play, my Lord, yet others think they are the rulers. But what do they own that *they* can give to *you* who owns everything?" Then Brahma speaks to him, the God of Devas, Madhusudana, who made the moving universe and rules its beings: "Please release Bali, for without hesitation he gave you everything—all the worlds of Earth, and those attained through ritual acts—and his entire self. If a sincere person who washes your feet and worships them with mere durva grass attains the supreme goal, why should Bali suffer like this when he gave you not water and grass but all three worlds?" (*BP* 8.22.12–23).

In reply to Brahma, Vamana says:

> I am gracious when I take away wealth. The atman embodied in the soul, jivatma, is impelled by intentional act (*karma*) and wanders through womb after womb until it somehow attains human birth. If it is then not prideful because of such things as lineage, achievements, youth, beauty, learning, authority, and prosperity, it is only because of my grace (*madanugraha*). Bali is such a person. He has conquered maya and is not deluded even in distress. When he was impoverished, expelled, fettered by his enemy, deserted by friends, and cursed by his guru, he did not swerve from his vow and kept to the truth. Even my distortion of dharma did not lead him from his word. He is completely resigned to me, and he shall become Indra in the next Manu Term, the eighth ruled by Savarni. In the meantime, he shall live with his grandfather Prahlada in the midst of Sutala, which Vishvakarma created.

And to Bali he says: "Go with your family and friends to Sutala envied even by those in Heaven. My wheel shall destroy anyone who attacks you and those with you, and you shall always perceive me there. My authority (*madanubhava*) shall keep you free of any taint from the asuras around you" (*BP* 8.22.24–36). Bali is astonished to hear the Infinite Ancient Person say this. "You are gracious to anyone who prostrates to you to become a devoted refugee (*prapannabhakta*). But you give me, an asura, your grace (*anugraha*) even before I can prostrate, bound as I am" (*BP* 8.23.5). Garuda releases Bali, who immediately prostrates to Hari and to the others, and then joyfully sets off for Sutala with his asuras. The Bhagavan has thus fulfilled Aditi's request to restore her son Indra to his throne.

Bali's grandfather Prahlada now addresses Vamana. "Never before has anyone—not Brahma, not Shri, not Shiva, nor any others—received this grace (*prasada*): that *you* will be the protector of the fort (*durgapala*). Brahma and

other devas are mighty because of Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet (*Padma-makaranda-nishevanena*). But granter of refuge! We are asuras of wicked ways and vile wombs—Why have you graciously brought us to the Path of the Southern Doctrine (*Dakshinya-drishti-padavi*)? Indeed, you are like the Wishing Tree, for you love devotees and give equally to any who ask." " 'My dear Prahlada," Vamana replies, "go to Sutala and be happy with your family. Every day, you shall see me there with mace in hand. The great delight you gain from this sight shall snap the bonds of your karma." Prahlada and his family obediently set out to join Bali in Sutala (*BP* 8.23.6–12).

But Bali's horse sacrifice remains incomplete. Hari Narayana turns to Shukra sitting among the priests of the *Brahman* Doctrine and tells him to do whatever is necessary to expiate this interruption. A Brahmin's gaze is enough expiation, Shukra respectfully replies, and besides, the rites can hardly be flawed, because Bali gave everything to Hari Narayana. And if merely reciting Hari's names will correct them, surely giving Him all of one's possessions will do the same. But Shukra knows that carrying out the Bhagavan's commands is the highest good, and completes the rites in the manner prescribed.

THE PANEL. This panel portrays Vamana's response to Bali's gift of three steps of land (Figure 9.3). He expands as the thrice-striding Trivikrama to divide the panel in half. He has four pairs of arms and hands, now damaged, and holds the same weapons as those held by Ashtabhujaswami, the Lord with Eight Arms, in the corresponding place on the sanctum north of the porch (Panel 3 discussed in chapter 6). But they are in a different order, with one substitution. From back to front and right to left are: 1) the wheel (missing) and 2) the conch (at top of panel); 3) the sword (damaged) and 4) the shield (missing); 5) the arrow and the 6) bow; and 7) the mace and, instead of the lotus, 8) the pointing hand.

Here Trivikrama has already measured out Earth with his first step and is taking the second to measure out the realms above. His left leg rises diagonally up toward the south corner of the panel, its foot level with the top of his head beneath his crown. Brahma in the upper worlds worships the foot, but one of Trivikrama's left hands extends beyond it to point to the very top of spacetime as its final destination. The figure thus defines three destinations of rebirth: 1) Vishnupadam, the pole star above Dhruvam, is at Trivikrama's head, neck, and three left arms; 2) Heaven and atmosphere beneath Dhruvam are in the middle at Trivikrama's chest and four right arms; 3) Earth and underworld Rasa are at Trivikrama's right foot. Whoever attains Vishnupadam escapes samsara, the ever-moving cycle of death and birth that propels all beings dwelling beneath Dhruvam.

The startled figure leaping southward (to the viewer's right), away from Vamana's upraised leg, with hair flying out at the sides of his head, appears to be Bali's grandfather, Prahlada.

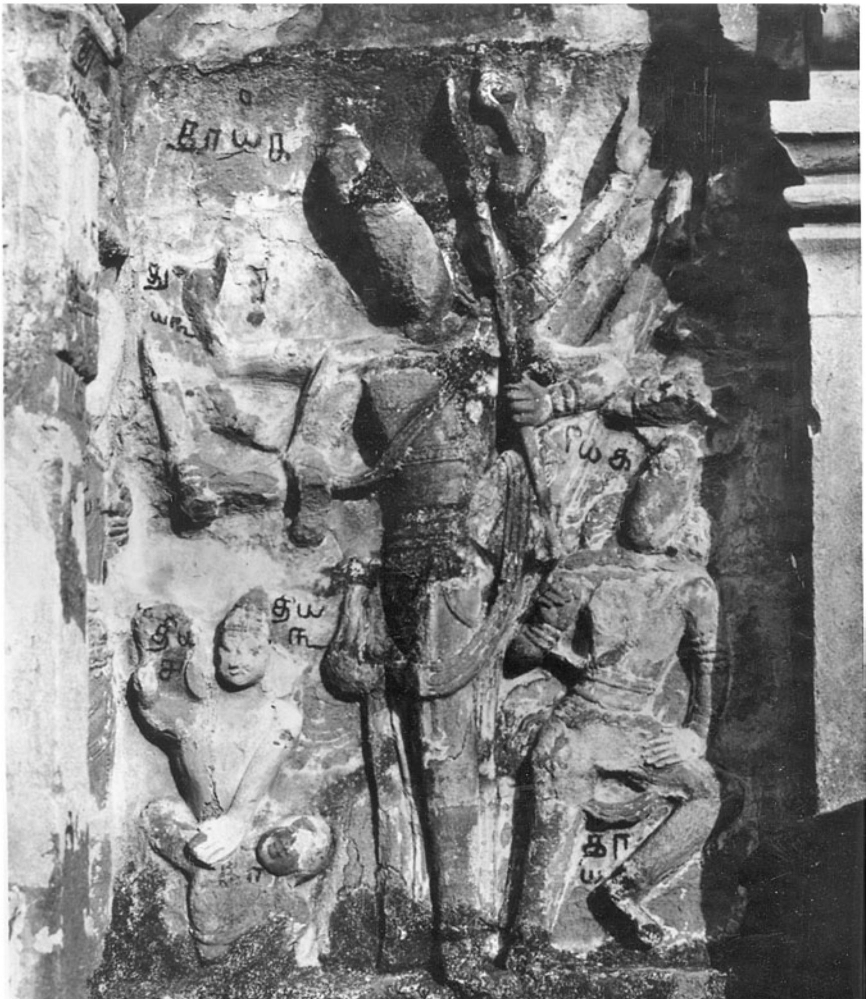


FIGURE 9.3. Panel 15: Vamana the Dwarf as Trivikrama the Thrice-strider (prior to repair). IFDI.

North of Trivikrama (to the viewer's left) is Garuda sitting on Bali, who is now the victim of his own horse sacrifice. Garuda, in a human shape with a beak-like nose, sits astride Bali's back as if he were a goat, and Bali faces west, as the victim should. The goat required as a substitute for the sponsor of the sacrifice has fled, which means that Bali must now sacrifice himself literally. First the victim must be bound, so Garuda pulls Bali's torso up in order to tie him up with Varuna's rope. He holds the loop of a double-strand rope in his right hand and is about to tie up Bali's right arm, which corresponds to the

goat's right front leg. If Bali were a goat, Garuda would then hook the rope to its right horn and tie it to the sacrificial pillar (*yupa*), which stands behind him, parallel to Trivikrama's right leg. A three-strand rope of darbha grass near the pillar's top hangs in a loop, mirroring the long garland looped around Trivikrama's right thigh.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the murti Vamana, the eighth interior formation. It also illustrates Vishnu's deceit snaring asuras as night begins in the southwest corner of the temple mandala. Vishnu similarly appears as Mohini (She Who Deludes) at the southwest corner of the bottom floor (Panel S6 discussed in chapter 15).

The panel also appears to signify a second consecration of Nandivarman, one relating to his sovereignty (*aishvarya*):

1. Its position on the sanctum and its eight-armed subject refer to Panel 3, which depicts Ashtabhujaswami. That panel refers in turn to the icon in the temple of Ashtabhujaswami or Attapuyakarattan, where Nandivarman began the consecration represented by panels of the northern sequence. This Trivikrama panel signifies the commencement of a similar but later consecration, perhaps in the same temple.
2. The first of these two consecrations manifests virya, and the second manifests aishvarya, the two properties of the Pre-eminently Mighty formation. The northern sequence ends with the "death" of Nandivarman as a seemingly autonomous Narendra or Indra of Men, immediately followed by his "birth" as a dependent Indra of Men, who rules with virya, with no results in mind other than the Bhagavan's pleasure. The southern sequence ends with Nandivarman ruling with aishvarya, a sovereignty derived from the Bhagavan. The consciousness of the Pallava realm as "his," and the consciousness of himself as "I" opposed to "You," have been replaced by consciousness of Vasudeva Krishna as his sovereign, and the only true sovereign, owner and ruler all things.

Moreover, this panel implies that during this second consecration Nandivarman gave away his realm, gave up all his dharmas as ruler, and took refuge in Vishnu present in his acharya. We learn this from Bali's two responses to Vamana using the title Uttamashloka. He first uses this title in his argument against Shukra: "If he truly is Uttamashloka he will not want to give up his fame by killing me and seizing Earth through deceit, nor lie on the battlefield struck down by me" (*BP* 8.20.13). Here Bali uses the title's overt meaning, "He of Most Excellent Renown," to refer to Vishnu as an enemy who will fight him honestly in a battle. But when Bali finds himself bound as a victim at Vamana's feet he sees that he and Vishnu are not equal as warriors,

and that Vishnu is *not* honest. This is when he uses the title the second time: "O Uttamashloka Bhagavan, though you regard my promise as false, I am true to my word. Please place your third footstep on my head" (*BP* 8.22.2). The converse of this statement is presumably also true, although Bali leaves it unstated: "O Uttamashloka Bhagavan, though I regard you as false, you are true to your word. Please place your third footstep on my head." Which of Uttamashloka's words does Bali have in mind?

The answer lies in the secret discussed earlier—that Vamana and Krishna are each Prishnigarbha reborn. What Vamana says applies to Krishna, and what Krishna says applies to Vamana. This means that Bali has in mind Krishna's famous statement to Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gita* 18.66: "Give up all dharmas and turn to me as your only refuge. I shall free you from all sins, have no care." There are two components of this statement; Panel 15 illustrates the first component: "Give up all dharmas and turn to me as your only refuge." Panel 16 illustrates the second component: "I shall free you from all sins, have no care."

The first component of Krishna's promise consists of two parts: "Give up all dharmas," and "turn to me as your only refuge." Events depicted at the bottom of the panel illustrate both. "Give up all dharmas": The dharmas Bali is required to give up are the rites of the horse sacrifice. But he has already given them up by virtue of Garuda tying him with Varuna's ropes to be the victim replacing the goat that has escaped—an irony, because the goat was meant to replace Bali. Literally, there is no dharma or ritual act that Bali can perform. Moreover, tied up at the sacrificial post near Vamana's feet, Bali's body is already turned toward him as his only possible refuge. Everything Krishna requires as voluntary acts has been done for Bali involuntarily; his freedom is entirely mental, to turn to Vamana as his only refuge. In this manner the bottom of panel 15 illustrates the first component of Krishna's famous promise. We will discuss the second component, "I shall free you from all sins, have no care," below with Panel 16.

This distinction between the two components of Krishna's promise is recognized by Bhagavata theology. The first component is known as "supreme" (*uttama*) and the second is known as "great" (*brihat*) (Vedanta Deshika 1956: 18–19). The "supreme" component produces the "great" component in the way a father produces a son. Not surprisingly, Vamana's family illustrates this idea. Sometime after Bali's sacrifice, Vamana marries a wife named Kirti (Glory). They have a son named Brihacchloka (Brihadshloka) (*BP* 6.18.8). Overtly their son's name means "He of Great Renown." Covertly it means "He of the Great Stanza." Vamana and his son thus represent the two components of Krishna's great promise: Vamana as Uttamashloka the father represents the first and "supreme" (*uttama*) statement, "Give up all dharmas and turn to me as your only refuge." Brihacchloka as his son born of Glory represents the derivative "great" (*brihat*) statement, "I shall free you from all sins, have no care."

Another meaning of this episode points to the mandate that, even though the Shudra king (represented by Bali) has given everything away to the Bhagavan through the acharya (represented by Vamana), prescribed sacrifices must be performed and completed. This is not because the sponsoring king seeks their fruits but because they are the means by which the Bhagavan turns the wheel of action in the world. As Krishna explains to Arjuna, the Master of Progeny emits his progeny together with sacrifices they are to perform, and these sacrifices sustain devas; in return devas sustain the progeny with food. The Bhagavan thus acts continuously to sustain the universe and His progeny in it, and His progeny are to imitate Him by continuously performing the acts assigned to them. All are to match their "turning" to the turning of this wheel of action He sets in motion—which includes any asura, Shudra, or barbarian (*mleccha*) who has received the Bhrigus' brahman nature through diksha (*BG* 3.10–26).

Tirumangai captures the two panels illustrating the story of Vamana's conquest of Bali (Panels 14 and 15) in stanza seven of his poem about the temple. In the first half of the stanza he reports Nandivarman's consecration to sovereignty by means of the story of Bali and Vamana; in the second half he reports its sovereign results. "One day, when Great Bali / Of the tall glittering crown / Sponsored a great sacrifice, / He took the shape of Dwarf, / And when water poured out / To seal the gift / He swindled him / Of this vast world—/ His place is Kacchi blazing in all / Directions with Agni's flaming mouths, // There in the Vishnu-house / The Emperor built / After he proclaimed victory / For his many troops / And shook the King of the South / who rules the world, / And Karur of the Virgin's / Tall rampart wall" (*PT* 2.9.7). Nandivarman's consecration, Tirumangai says, frightened the Pandyan of Madurai named Maravarman Rajasimha (730–765 CE), and the Cheran ruler of Karur aligned with him. Tirumangai continues this pattern in stanzas eight and nine, which capture the meanings of the next panel.

Panel 16: Narayana Protects Bali from Ravana

THE STORY. Ravana, the king of rakshasas who has ten heads, is roaming around the world seeing to conquer it. When he comes to the gate of Bali's Sutala he finds "Narayana, the Guru of the Entire Moving Universe," sitting there with mace in hand as protector of the fort (*durgapala*). But before Ravana can even challenge Bali, Narayana flicks his toe, and this rakshasa king of ten necks and heads flies thousands of miles away (*BP* 5.24.27).

THE PANEL. This damaged panel captures the moment just before the Narayana flicks his toe. It divides vertically into halves (Figure 9.4). In the northern half (to the viewer's left) Narayana sits on a throne, whose lower part is obliterated. His left leg is pendent and his damaged right leg is tucked up on

the throne in the posture of royal ease. Narayana has four faces, gazing in the cardinal directions as if to illustrate his identity as "Guru of the Entire Moving Universe." His three visible faces are each crowned;[5] the front face looks westward, and perhaps tilts slightly down toward the south.



FIGURE 9.4. Panel 16: Narayana protects Bali from Ravana (prior to repair). IFDI.

This large and damaged figure, with four faces and Ravana at its feet, has been identified variously. The *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture* (1983) identifies it as "Ravana Taking away Kailasa" (*Kailasaharana*), which means the four-face figure is Shiva (*EITA* 1.1: 72, table 9). In contrast, the recent restorers of this Vishnu-house appear to have identified the four-face figure as Brahma. Brahma with four faces does appear in the temple, of course. He appears this way in the three sculpted scenes of Vasudeva's vyuha formations on the sanctum below. And he appears this way in the second of two adjacent panels on the top register of the prakara's western wall. The first panel of the latter depicts the unmanifest Narayana Vasudeva as the origin of Brahma. The panel to His left depicts Brahma with four faces as the source of the brahmanda (Figure 9.5).

Three of Brahma's four faces are visible in this depiction, each with a crown, above which there appears to extend tall matted hair, or perhaps the crown's top. He has two pairs of arms. His back right hand appears to form a fist, with the palm facing the viewer, and it may hold something, perhaps the circular garland of beads used for mantra recitation (*japamala*). His back left hand, with palm facing the viewer, appears to form the jnanamudra of the left hand: the little finger stands up straight, the other fingers curl into the palm, and the thumb bends over the index finger (*PS* 1974: 73). This hand also appears to hold something that extends down from both sides, hidden, perhaps, behind Brahma's arm. His front right hand forms the abhayamudra, and his front left hand rests in his lap, palm up, as if holding a book. The book is the four Vedas, which serve as Brahma's "eyes" as he emanates his Daytime of Boar. Brahma's two left hands thus identify him as the teacher of the Vedas, whose mantras embody jnana knowledge.

This depiction of Brahma with four faces shares features with the depiction of Narayana with four faces in Panel 16, to which we return. Narayana, like Brahma, has two pairs of arms and three visible faces. He likewise sits in the royal posture of ease. But his damaged wheel, normally held by his back right hand, appears to have been restored to suggest Brahma's garland of prayer beads held on top of the hand. The damaged conch, normally held by his back left hand, is now only suggestive: it may be a conch on top of the hand, or a diminutive version of the water pot Brahma usually holds in the same hand.[6] His front pair of arms, however, reveals that this four-face figure is Narayana protecting Bali in Sutala, as the story tells us. While his left hand rests on his left thigh, his front right hand forms a mudra: the middle finger, the ring finger, and the little finger grasp the thumb, and the tip of the index finger touches the thumb's knuckle. No equivalent to this mudra appears in the *Padma-samhita* (as they are illustrated in *PS* 1974). But it does correspond to the vajramudra, which is fundamental to Buddhist Vajrayana (Saunders 1985: 17–27; 38–39, fig. 2).



FIGURE 9.5. Brahma with four faces (prakara western wall, top register, second panel). Photo by Sathya Seelan.

Vajrayana (also known as Esoteric Buddhism) is believed to have begun in south India with a secret teaching given by Vairochana to the sage Vajrasattva. Evidence from the Tamil *Manimekalai* suggests that by the fifth century the Kanchipuram court patronized it; and the Pallava king Mahendravarman uses the royal Buddhist vihara and one of its Shakyabhikshu residents in the plot of his Sanskrit farce, the *Mattavilasa Prahasana* of ca. 600. A few decades later, in Mamallapuram, appears the first known inscription listing the ten avataras of Vishnu, and one of them—the ninth—is the Buddha. This inscription is above the shrine for Goddess Durga in what is now called the Adivaraha Cave-temple, a temple created in the seventh century, according to the Pancharatra Agama. The appearance of the Buddha in this southern corner of shakti and tejas is explained by Akrura in his prayer discussed at Panel 12 in chapter 6: "Veneration to Buddha the Pure, who deludes Daityas and Danavas" (*BP* 10.40.22). At the beginning of the Kali Yuga, the Bhagavan appears as the bhikshu known as the Shakyamuni Buddha in order to deceive asuras—which includes men and women who are bhikshus and bhikshunis (as discussed at Panel 17 in chapter 10). Yet Vishnu as the Buddha remains pure even as he appears in this deceiving bhikshu guise. This "Bhagavata Buddha" points to the presence in the Kanchipuram court of Buddhists, especially of the Vajrayana (further discussion of Buddhists in Kanchipuram appears in chapter 15). And it explains the appearance of the vajramudra in this southwest corner of deceit: the diamond-hard vajra of Narayana abiding as protector of the fort cuts through all "asura" delusion.

The southern half of Panel 16 is filled by a vertical sequence of three figures. Ravana sits at the bottom. He is oriented toward the north, but looks directly west with one of his three visible heads. His posture rudely mimics Narayana's, with his right leg bent under his extended left leg, its foot emerging into view under his raised left knee. His left leg does not hang down, but extends toward the north, indicating that he is flying, or is sitting on the ground. In contrast to Narayana's four heads fused into one, Ravana's ten heads are differentiated. The three that are visible imply two others that cannot be seen, and these five represent all ten, matched by his ten pairs of arms, which are visible.[7] The front pair of arms is the largest. The front left hand rests on the left hip and thigh. The front right elbow rests on the right knee, but the mudra formed by the right hand is not clear due to damage.

Directly above and to Narayana's left sits the acharya Shukra, a small figure with piled-up hair. A doorway framing him suggests that he is enthroned in an open hall (*mandapa*). Above the roof of this hall, at the level of Narayana's head, is Bali wearing a crown, leaping up in alarm from his throne. His right leg bends at the knee and points to the north, mirrored by his right arm, whose open hand bends backward to direct the viewer to the space above Narayana's head. His left arm extends outward to the south and disappears in the badly damaged corner. Evidence of a figure sitting there suggests Bali's queen, Vindhyavali.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the murti Trivikrama. It also represents the great (*brihat*) promise following from the supreme (*uttama*) statement of the previous panel: "I will free you from all sin, have no care." Narayana as the protector of fortified Sutala kicks Ravana far away from Bali—this fulfills Vamana's promise to Bali: "Go with your family and friends to Sutala envied even by those in Heaven. My wheel shall destroy anyone who attacks you and those with you, and you shall always perceive me there. My authority shall keep you free of any taint from the asuras around you." Moreover, the vajramudra formed by guru Narayana's right hand signifies the end of asura delusion due to his abiding presence as protector of the fort.

The asura Bali in this panel, as in the previous two depicting this story of Dwarf, represents Nandivarman. He is a Malla who rules Dravidas, and Veda judges both Mallas and Dravidas to be Shudras who once were Kshatriyas.[8] Dwarf represents Nandivarman's acharya, a master of prayoga rites prescribed by the Pancharatra Agama for protection. Ruler and acharya similarly appear below in the sculpted scene on the prakara wall that depicts Nandivarman enthroned as Bhagavata emperor on one side and his acharya enthroned in a mandapa on the other. That panel faces east toward this one, and this one faces west toward that one, both in the southwest corner. Nandivarman on the prakara wall is enthroned with his queen, just as is Bali on the sanctum (although her image is almost obliterated by damage). Nandivarman's acharya sits on the prakara in a mandapa, just as Bali's acharya does here, and both mandapas stand to the left of God's body. The body on the prakara is the model of the newly built Emperor's Vishnu-house, on the sanctum it is Trivikrama with four faces.

The two share a connection to Ravana. Nandivarman sits enthroned on the prakara because his general, Udayacandra, won seven decisive battles.[9] According to the eighth stanza of Kalikanri's poem about this Vishnu-house, the crucial battle at Nenmeli frightened the Chera king the way Rama frightened Ravana when he crossed the sea to Lanka. Here on the sanctum Bali enthroned in Sutala is alarmed at Ravana's appearance before Trivikrama flicks him away with his toe.

This panel also represents the conclusion of Nandivarman's second consecration. Guru Narayana with four faces about to kick away Ravana represents the acharya in Nandivarman's court who protects him through rites; the startled Bali leaping up from his throne represents the protected Nandivarman.

Tirumangai similarly represents Nandivarman's protecting acharya in stanzas eight and nine of his poem. He appears in the first half of each stanza, and the result of his presence at court appears in the second half. Rama represents the acharya in stanza eight, as discussed at Panel 6 in chapter 7. Here the result of his presence is a frightened Chera ruler at a place called

Nenmeli: "Once a King of vigor / With the Umbrella of a hero / And an army of monkeys / Blocked the sea with mountains—/ He is my Father the Lord / Whose place in beautiful Kacchi / Encircled by ornate halls // Is the Emperor's Vishnu-house / Served by the Sovereign of Pallavas / who seized the Spear of War / in his right hand / and with the power of an army / frightened in Nenmeli / the virile Villavan bull, / the Cheran who owns the Bow" (*PT* 2.9.8). Nandivarman's Spear of War frightened the opposing Cheran in the way Rama's arrow frightened the opposing Ocean. Moreover, the Cheran implies Nandivarman's greater opponent, the Pandyan of Madurai, just as Ocean implies Rama's greater opponent, Ravana of Lanka. The fact that both Ravana and Maravarman Rajasimha were devoted to Shiva strengthens Tirumangai's analogy.

Nandivarman's protecting acharya appears in stanza nine as the cowherd Krishna. Tirumangai refers to an episode in the Krishna Story that is not in the *Bhagavata Purana*, but is well known to Tamil Bhagavatas: Krishna conquered Lust (*Mal*) disguised as seven bulls, and this conquest won him his cross-cousin Pinnai as his bride. The consequence of the acharya's protection is Nandivarman's unrivaled status as the Sovereign of Pallavas: "Pinnai's forehead is a / Gleaming crescent moon / And she's a cousin, / So long ago in battle / He subdued deceiving Lust / In the shape of seven bulls, / And now owns beautiful Kacchi / With its surrounding wealth, // Where the Sovereign of Pallavas / Serves the Vishnu-house he built, / after he conquered those / angry kings of swords / stained black from blood / As the Emperor who owns / The Drum with a bitter mouth / And the Conch with the roar of the sea" (*PT* 2.9.9).

The sculpted prakara panels that depict the historical events Tirumangai refers to in this poem have not been identified so far, with two exceptions. The first is the depiction of Pallavamalla's unction as Kanchipuram's Indra of Men with the title Nandivarman (see Figure 4.3). The second is Nandivarman's later rule as the Bhagavata Sovereign of Pallavas (see Figure 4.4).This second set of prakara panels appears at the southwest corner of the temple mandala. This sequence faces the panels depicting the story of Bali and Vamana on the middle floor sanctum. The Bali and Vamana sequence faces west, and this prakara sequence faces east. On the temple mandala these facing sequences are in the southwest corner of disintegration, where night and the Kali Yuga begin and asura powers increase. Tirumangai appears to have had these correlated sequences in mind in the ninth stanza, for he places the sanctum panels facing west in its first half, and the prakara panels facing east in its second half.

Aditi's role in the story of Dwarf and Bali concluded here points ahead to the panel illustrating Yudhishthira's rajasuya, which ends this Path of the Southern Doctrine (Panel 24). Aditi in the rajasuya is two complementary modes of Goddess Earth.[10] She is Disorder (*nirriti*) and Goodwill (*anumati*). On the mandala, Goodwill is located in the northeast, where the human and deva

realms meet at the junction of sky and earth. Disorder is located in the southwest, where the ancestors and asuras meet at the junction of the underworld and earth. Disorder must be satisfied before Goodwill can benefit the rajasuya sponsor.[11]

In the birth metaphor governing the rajasuya, Disorder as the female Nirriti represents the cover of the embryo; it is constituted of sin (*papman*), phlegm, amnion, and chorion. A priest removes these covers from the patron, offers them to Nirriti in the southwest, and disposes of them as the concluding gift (*dakshina*) of a black garment with a black fringe. He then asks Nirriti to free the patron from anxiety or distress. This allows Goodwill as the female Anumati to open a way upward at the northeast for the patron, now born a Master of Progeny (*prajapati*). Aditi's inauguration of her Milk Vow contains other allusions to the rajasuya: in the soil dug up from the ground, in the Bhagavan as Boar, and in the Goddess Earth.

This brings us to the last two panels of the southern sequence, which are on the sanctum's eastern wall.

Eastern Panels of the Southern Path

Panel 23: Krishna Leaps up to Slay Kamsa

This panel follows directly from southern sequence Panel 15, but the episode it illustrates continues directly from northern sequence Panel 12 on this same eastern side.

The Story. After Krishna has slain the wrestler Chanura, the gopas dance with Krishna and Balarama in the wrestling arena until Kamsa, king of Bhojas, orders the music to stop. "Throw these sons of Vasudeva out of the city," he commands, "seize their wealth, tie up Nanda, kill Vasudeva and my father Ugrasena too, for he has sided with my enemy." This infuriates Krishna, and with ease he leaps up to Kamsa's high seat. Kamsa, sword in hand, tries to resist, but Krishna seizes his hair, throws him down onto the arena floor, and jumps on him. He then drags Kamsa's corpse around the arena, to the astonishment of all. But Kamsa, out of fear, has had the Ruler in mind at all times—while he drank, ate, moved about, slept or breathed—and he achieves a very difficult goal: he now has the shape of the Bhagavan holding the wheel (*BP* 10.44.31–39).

Kamsa's eight brothers attack, but Balarama clubs them to death, and devas scatter flowers and dance. The women of the dead come forward, embrace the bodies of their heroes, and lament: "Krishna is the origin, the end, and the protector of all beings, and well-being comes to no one who spurns him." The Bhagavan, creator of the world, consoles the women and arranges for the funeral rites (*BP* 10.44.40–48).

Krishna and Balarama release their parents, Vasudeva and Devaki, from prison. Krishna welcomes back all his relatives who had fled from Kamsa, and installs his maternal grandfather Ugrasena on the Mathura throne. Krishna establishes these members of the Yadu, Vrishni, Andhaka, Madhu, Dasharha, Kukura, and other clans in their own homes with wealth. Krishna and Balarama then speak to Nanda with the affection of sons, promising to visit him in Gokula, and send him off laden with gifts. The brothers' lives as cowherds are now over (*BP* 10.44.50–51; 45.1–25).

Vasudeva has Purodhasa and Brahmins perform the sacrament of the second birth for his two Kshatriya sons. After this Garga, the acharya of the Yadu clan, consecrates them to the Gayatri vow, and they keep its required celibacy. By behaving this way as men they hide their omniscient knowledge as Rulers of the Moving Universe. They are now to live and study with a guru, so they go to Avantipura, where Sandipani of Kashi dwells. In sixty-four days and nights they learn everything he has to teach. It is time for them to complete their discipleship by giving their guru a ritual gift (*gurudakshina*), and Sandipani asks them to bring back his son, who had died in the sea at Prabhasa on the western shore. Krishna and Balarama agree and set out in their chariot for Prabhasa, where they encounter Ocean (Sindhu). He assures them that he did not kill the boy; rather, he was killed by the asura Panchajanya, who travels the sea in the shape of a conch. Krishna immediately enters the sea, finds the asura, and slays him. But the guru's son is nowhere to be found. He returns to his chariot with the conch shell that had been the asura's body, and with Balarama, whose weapon is a plough, sets out southward for Yama's city of Samyamani on the mountain Boundary of the Mind. They reach the city, Krishna blows the conch Panchajanya, and Yama appears immediately. "O Vishnu at play as human youths, what may I do for You?" he asks. Krishna replies, "Our guru's son, whose karma has bound him, has been brought here to you. Nevertheless, Great King, I command you to release him." Yama complies immediately, and Krishna and Balarama bring Sandipani his son. Their guru refuses a second gift, releasing the brothers to return to Mathura and to their roles as Kshatriya heroes (*BP* 10.45.26–50).

THE PANEL. The panel depicts the moment Krishna leaps up to Kamsa and grasps his hair (Figure 9.6). The viewer is in the place of Akrura. Kamsa's seat above the arena floor divides the panel into two parts horizontally. In the upper part, Krishna with two arms and a tall crown floats lightly in the air; his crowned head breaks through the panel's frame above to express his buoyancy and sovereignty. He faces eastward and gazes toward the viewer, while his right hand grasps the top of Kamsa's hair. Krishna's left arm stretches northward and bends down at the elbow with his hand near his waist; his left hand may form a mudra that is not discernable. His legs capture his leap: the left leg stretches downward to the north as the right leg rises up and bends at the knee.



FIGURE 9.6. Panel 23: Krishna leaps up to slay Kamsa. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

Kamsa sits to the south in a state of collapse, his deflated torso contrasting with Krishna's buoyancy. His left leg hangs down from his seat, his right leg rests on it, and he leans on his right arm. His left forearm bends upward and his hand may hold a weapon, but the damage is too great to be sure. His head faces eastward and tilts slightly northward as Krishna pulls the top of his long and tied hair. Kamsa's left leg dangles into the lower half of the panel, and Balarama's head rises into its upper half—a visual arrangement indicating that the events depicted in the two parts are simultaneous.

As Krishna leaps up to slay Kamsa in the panel's upper part, Balarama continues to dance with the gopas in the lower part (Figure 9.7). Balarama is crowned, has two arms, and faces eastward as he looks down and southward; his eyes appear to gaze beyond his graceful right arm and open hand, whose thumb curls inward and palm faces the floor. His left arm has broken off above the elbow. The triangle of his legs and feet express his dance: he bends his thighs outward, points his knees north and south, crosses his ankles, and touches the floor with his toes. Balarama's right hand and southward gaze lead the viewer's eyes to a rectangular structure under Kamsa's seat. A man wearing a crown or turban sits inside it with legs crossed. The mudra his right hand forms may be the mushtimudra of Krishna's right hand in Panel 11, or the balimudra, for they have the same shape. His raised left hand, with fingers spread, suggests startled expectation. Most likely this man is Vasudeva, father of Balarama and Krishna, whom Kamsa had shackled with Devaki before he sent Keshi to slay Krishna (*BP* 10.38.19–20). His position under Kamsa's throne illustrates Vasudeva's imprisonment by the king of Bhojas. But his left hand gesturing upward to Krishna's right hand grasping Kamsa's hair points to his imminent emancipation by his son.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel depicting Kamsa's death represents the end of Krishna and Balarama's career as cowherds, their future study with their guru Sandipani, and their future as Kshatriyas. It also represents the brothers' subsequent careers in Mathura and then Dvaraka, which we shall discuss below. Moreover, it represents the meaning of Krishna's conch Panchajanya, whose name means "five classes of beings": 1) devas and asuras; 2) humans; 3) gandharvas and apsaras; 4) snakes, and 5) ancestors. When Krishna blows this conch, karma is overruled and Yama restores the dead to life, presumably the dead of all five of these classes of beings. This detail is significant, because this southern sequence documents rites of protection against demons and death as represented by Bali, who resides in Sutala under the purifying protection of Narayana's presence.

This panel continues the theme of purification for royal sadhakas, who are Shudras represented by asuras. Bali at the southwest corner and Kamsa here at the southeast corner are both asuras; each represents the Shudra ruler at



FIGURE 9.7. Balarama dances; Vasudeva sits imprisoned (prior to repair). IFDI.

different stages in his purification as a sovereign ruler. Bali represents the royal sadhaka who has received consecration to the sadhana called the Path of the Southern Doctrine discussed below in chapter 10. Kamsa represents the royal sadhaka who attains this sadhana's fruits. After Vishnu slays the asura Kalanemi, he is reborn as Kamsa. After Krishna slays Kamsa, he attains the mode of emancipation known as "with the same shape" (*sarupya*). Kamsa's persistent focus on Krishna as his enemy led to this achievement, and illustrates what Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita*: "Without a doubt, whoever has only me in mind, even at death, is freed from the body and attains my mode of being. Whatever mode of being he has in mind when he abandons the body at the end, O Son of Kunti, he has become that mode of being and inevitably attains only it. Therefore, remember me at all times and fight. If you fix your mind and intellect on me and have no doubt, you will come only to me" (*BG*

8.5–7). Krishna goes on to prescribe yoga as the means to this remembrance, which Kamsa's success illustrates.

This panel also documents two purifying deaths resulting from the sadhana. The first death is of the consciousness of "This is mine" (*mamaka*). From this death follows the second death, of the consciousness of "This am I" (*ahamkarana, ahamkara*). These two deaths result in the peace Krishna describes to Arjuna: "The man who puts away all desires and walks free of longing, without the sense that 'This is mine' and 'This am I,' moves close to peace. This is the standing still of *brahman*, Son of Pritha; having reached it he is never again confused, and standing there at the time of death he falls into *brahman's* extinction" (*BG* 2.71–72). Kamsa's death at the hands of Krishna represents the death of "This is mine." The later death of his guru and father-in-law, Jarasandha, at the hands of Bhimasena in the presence of Krishna, represents the death of "This am I." This final death results directly from the consecration represented by Bali and Vamana, as we learn from Jarasandha's story. Krishna disguised as a Brahmin asks Jarasandha for a gift. When Jarasandha gives it, he identifies himself with Bali who gave everything to Vishnu disguised as a Brahmin. Jarasandha offers everything, even his head, but his intent is egoistic and results in the opposite of protection: Bhimasena splits Jarasandha exactly in half, as if the ego's perception of "I" lies on one side, and its perception of "You" lies on the other. To make these meanings evident, let us briefly turn to the stories of Kamsa and Jarasandha.

KAMSA AND JARASANDHA. Kamsa is the rebirth of the great asura named Kalanemi (which may mean "a dark portion of time"). Vishnu kills Kalanemi after the Milk Ocean is churned, just before he slaughters Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan (BP 8.10.56–57; 10.1.68; these stories are depicted by Panel 20, and are discussed in chapter 10). Kalanemi is reborn into the Vrishni lineage as Krishna's maternal cousin Kamsa. They live in the ancient realm of the Kurus, which is at the center of Aryavarta (the Nobles' Realm). Kamsa's father, Ugrasena, is brother to Devaki's father, Devaka. Ugrasena rules the Yadus' realm of Shurasena from Mathura on the Yamuna River, where Hari is always present (BP 10.1.27–28). Kamsa remembers that he was Kalanemi and that Vishnu killed him, and begins to oppress the Yadus. He deposes his father Ugrasena, takes over Mathura, and marries the two daughters of Jarasandha, ruler of Magadha to the east. As he tells Akrura when planning Krishna's and Balarama's deaths in Mathura, he has significant military support. There is Jarasandha his guru, his friend Dvivida, and his friends Shambara, Naraka, and Bana; they will help him destroy all kings who side with devas. He then will then "enjoy Earth," for she will be his possession to do with as he pleases (BP 10.1.68–69; 36.35–36; 50.1–2).

Jarasandha's story begins with Brihadratha. He was a descendent of Kuru and ruled the eastern side of Aryavarta called Magadha. Brihadratha had two

wives, twin daughters of the king of Kashi. According to the *Mahabharata*, Jarasandha was born in halves to both wives; this was by means of a mango a seer had blessed. Each had eaten one half of it. (*MBh* 2.16–17; van Buitenen 2: 62–66). According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, a single wife gave birth to a boy split in half (*BP* 9.22.7–8). In both accounts, the two halves were thrown out as rubbish. But they were "reborn" into a single baby when the rakshasi named Jara (Decay or Old Age) fused them together into a diamond-hard body. Brihadratha's son is therefore known as Jarasandha (Joined by Decay), an apt symbol of the ego divided between "I" and "You." Jarasandha now rules Magadha. He has one son named Sahadeva (Mighty Deva) and two daughters married to his disciple Kamsa ruling in Mathura. His capital of Girivraja (Fenced by Mountains) has five gateways (like the sense organs of the gross body). Jarasandha rules in this city and desires complete sovereignty (like the ego in the gross body). He therefore opposes Yudhishthira's claim of samraj.

After Krishna slays Kamsa, Jarasandha avenges his disciple and son-in-law by attacking Krishna and Balarama at Mathura eighteen times. Between his seventeenth and eighteenth attacks, however, two significant events take place. First, a Yavana king—a melccha or barbarian—lays siege to Mathura. In the face of this threat together with that of Jarasandha, Krishna decides to found his own durga and move his people there from Mathura. He therefore builds the city called Dvara or Dvaraka (Doorway) in the midst of the sea off the western coast. Second, Krishna arranges for the Yavana's death in a cave by means of the burning gaze of Muchukunda, the son of Mandhatri of the solar Ikshvaku lineage (a story which explains that the conversion of a Yavana king to Bhagavata Dharma is a recollection of his true identity). Jarasandha then attacks Krishna for the eighteenth time, but Krishna escapes from the mountain where Jarasandha thought he had trapped them. Jarasandha is left thinking that he has slain Krishna and Balarama, and can now do as he pleases (*BP* 10.52.5–14).

Krishna and Balarama dwell at Dvaraka, and Krishna completes his sovereign status by means of marriage. He first marries Rukmini and seven other primary wives. He then marries about 16,000 others, and has many children by them all (*BP* 10.52.15–44; 53–70.21). These 16,008 wives represent the kingdoms of Bharata, and Krishna now owns and rules them from Dvaraka in the western sea.

One day a messenger from Magadha appears in Krishna's court to report that Jarasandha has performed the samraj rite of Victory in the Four Directions. He captured any ruler who did not defer to him, and some 20,000 of them are now imprisoned in Girivraja. This messenger has come on their behalf to tell Krishna, "They are refugees at the soles of your feet" (*BP* 10.70.22–31). The rishi Narada now appears to convey Yudhishthira's invitation to attend his rajasuya at Indraprastha in the Khandava Forest. Krishna knows that the Yadus would rather fight Jarasandha than go to the rajasuya, so

he asks advice of his old friend and counselor Uddhava, whom he knows will voice what he wants the Yadus to hear (*BP* 10.70.32–47). Uddhava responds skillfully. A ruler is qualified for the rajasuya once he has subdued his neighbors, he says, and therefore Govinda must defeat Jarasandha and release the imprisoned kings on Yudhishthira's behalf. But Jarasandha can be killed only in a duel, and only by Bhimasena in Krishna's presence. They must go to Girivraja disguised as Brahmins, because Jarasandha never refuses a Brahmin. Killing him and freeing the kings will be stunning acts, like the "release of the atman of the father of master elephants (*kunjarapati*), like the release of Janaka's daughter Sita, and like the release of your own parents [Vasudeva and Devaki]" (*BP* 10.71.9).[12]

Narada and Krishna agree with Uddhava, and Krishna assures the messenger from the imprisoned kings that Jarasandha will be killed. Narada leaves, and Krishna sets out with his retinue for Indraprastha. The five Pandavas meet him with love and reverence, escort him into the city, and then into the palace built by the asura architect named Maya. A few months later, when it is time to prepare for the rajasuya, Govinda advises Yudhishthira to send his four brothers in the cardinal directions to subdue rulers and collect funds needed for the ceremonies. They enter upon this Victory in the Four Directions and are successful everywhere except eastward in Magadha (*BP* 10.71.11–46; 72.1–16).

Bhima, Arjuna, and Krishna now set out for Magadha to slay Jarasandha, for only then can Yudhishthira be consecrated to samraj. They are dressed as Brahmins because they know Jarasandha is devoted to them. They meet Magadha's king inside his capital while he is distributing ritual gifts, and introduce themselves as Brahmin guests. They tell him that for his own sake he is to give them what they ask. "It is ignoble not to use the impermanent body to gain the fame of the imperishable," they say, and cite many who "by means of the impermanent gained the permanent." By this they mean the gift of one's body, and remind Jarasandha of six famous examples (*BP* 10.72.20–21).

The first example is Harishchandra and Shunahshepa in the story told at the conclusion of the rajasuya. Vishvamitra granted Harishchandra knowledge of the Self (*atman*) because he and his wife had conducted the human sacrifice of Shunahshepa well. Harishchandra attained the Self by using the discipline of apyaya-yoga to devolve his consciousness from its embodiments in earth, water, fire, wind, and space, until the Self emerged in its purity (*BP* 9.7.7–27; 16.28–37).

The second example is Rantideva. He was attached to Vasudeva and generously gave food to both the "pure" and the "impure" at the expense of himself and his family. He was therefore freed of all physical and mental bondage and his associates became yogins devoted to Narayana (*BP* 9.21.1–8). The third example, Mudgala, is a son of Vishvamitra.[13] He similarly gave food away at the expense of himself and his family, even though he had little, for he

lived like a pigeon and gleaned whatever fallen paddy he could find. When Indra offered him heaven, Mudgala chose "extinguishing" (*nirvana*) instead and attained it after more severe tapas.

The fourth example is King Shibi, whom Bali cited to support his view of dana. Shibi famously gave himself away as the yajnamana does in the sacrifice, but without a substitute animal as victim. When a dove took refuge from a hawk in Shibi's lap he was faced with a conflict in his royal dharma: he is to feed his subjects (the hawk) and protect them (the dove). His solution was to protect the dove by cutting his own body into pieces to feed the hawk.[14]

The fifth example is Bali, who stuck by his promise to give Dwarf as much earth as he could measure in three steps. The final example is the hunter, the pigeon, and its mate. A hunter captured a male pigeon. The pigeon's wife saw that the hunter was hungry and gave herself to a fire in order to feed him. This self-giving act led the hunter to free her mate, to renounce his cruelty, and eventually to give himself to a forest fire. All three ended up in heaven.[15]

These six stories illustrate the great fruit (*phala*) produced by the gift of one's body, and Jarasandha's story is a seventh. He realizes that the three "Brahmins" who cite these examples are really Kshatriyas, and remembers them vaguely. Yet he decides to give them whatever they request, "even his self which is difficult to renounce." Then (in Tapasyananda's translation) he muses on the story of Bali and Dwarf: "Don't we see that though deprived of all his possessions by Vishnu in the guise of a Brahmana, Bali's unstained (*akalmasha*) reputation only spread everywhere thereby? Though knowing very well that it was Vishnu that had come as a Brahmana in order to deprive him of world sovereignty in favour of Indra, and though warned of it and obstructed by his preceptor Shukra, that Asura king Bali offered the whole earth in gift to Vishnu. Of what use is a Kshatriya's body, which is perishable by nature, if he fails to earn the vast reputation of having used it in the service of holy men (*vipula*)?" (*BP* 10.72.22–27; Tapasyananda 3: 354). Jarasandha then says to Krishna, Arjuna, and Bhima, "O Brahmins (*vipra*), whatever you desire I will give, even my own head."

Jarasanda is now trapped. Krishna asks for a duel, and then reveals that the other two "Brahmins" are the brothers Bhimasena and Arjuna, and that he is their maternal cousin, Krishna. They have come not for food, he says, but for a fight. Jarasandha laughs derisively. "I will not fight Krishna, because he earlier fled from me and took refuge in Dvaraka in the sea; and I will not fight Arjuna, because he is too young; but I will fight Bhimasena, because he is an equal match" (*BP* 10.72.22–32).

Jarasandha gives Bhima a powerful mace, takes one of his own, and leads them all to level ground outside the city. Arjuna and Krishna watch as Jarasandha and Bhima begin to fight, slamming their diamond-hard maces against each other until they splinter. Then they use their fists. This violent

fistfight goes on during daylight, but at night they rest as friends. After twenty-seven days of fighting they are in a deadlock, and Bhima asks Madhava how to break it. When Krishna silently splits a twig in two pieces, Bhima gets the message. On the twenty-eighth day Bhima seizes Jarasanda by the legs, throws him to the ground, holds on to one leg as he stands on the other, and splits him from bottom to top. Jarasandha lies on the ground in the symmetrical halves Jara had fused together, each with one leg, one thigh, one testicle, one hip, one breast, one shoulder, one arm, one eye, one brow, and one ear. Magadha wails at its loss, but Arjuna and Achyuta the Unfallen embrace Bhima in honor. Krishna installs Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, as king. And he frees the 20,800 prisoners (*BP* 10.72.33–48).

The freed kings, who by now are mere skin and bones, fall prostrate at Krishna's feet when they see him, and ask God the Ruler of Devas for protection. They are not angry with Jarasandha, they tell Madhusudana, because imprisonment has led to this vision of him. Now they understand the misery they have brought to others by their own conquests for the sake of wealth. No longer do they want a kingdom, nor the fruits of acts that lead to Heaven, only continuous remembrance of Krishna's feet as long they exist in samsara. "Veneration to Krishna, to Vasudeva, to Hari, to the Supreme Atman, to the Destroyer of Faults for the one who prostrates," they proclaim, "and veneration to Govinda!" Krishna promises them deep-seated bhakti to him who is the atman and ruler of everything. He agrees that majestic wealth (*shri*) can drive people mad. He then instructs them how to rule as Bhagavatas: They should keep in mind that all things are transitory, sacrifice to Krishna, and with unified intent protect their subjects by means of dharma. As they produce generations of progeny, happiness and sorrow will come and go; but nevertheless they should continue to serve as kings fixed in the mind on Krishna. They should be indifferent to the body and so on, delight in the atman, and be firm in vows. If they concentrate their minds completely on him, at death they shall come to him, the *brahman* (*BP* 10.73.18–23). After this Krishna directs Sahadeva to have the kings bathed, dressed, and fed, to give them gifts, and to send them back to their realms in chariots studded with gold and gems. All 20,800 return to their capitals and teach their ministers the Great Person's deeds, eager to rule as the Bhagavan had said.[16]

Krishna arrives in Indraprastha with Bhimasena and Arjuna, to Yudhishthira's great joy, for Keshava's success is an extraordinarily gracious gift. Yudhishthira's praise of Krishna in fact sums up what this panel represents. "O unconquered Madhava, your bhaktas do not distinguish between 'mine and I,' and between 'you and yours,' for these distinctions are the defects of a beast" (*BP* 10.74.5). Kamsa and Jarasandha were the "beasts" and had to be slaughtered for the sake of Yudhishthira's consecration to samraj. Yudishisthira now represents the royal sadhaka, who at the end of this southern path has been given true aishvarya.

A further meaning of this panel lies in the disordered mandala it represents. When the royal sadhaka begins walking the Path of the Southern Doctrine, his ego has supreme soverignty (*samraj*) over his waking consciousness. The Krishnakatha depicts this sovereign ego as Jarasandha ruling Aryavarta from Magadha in the east. Both Aryavarta and the sadhaka are disordered mandalas, as Figure 9.8 illustrates.

Krishna describes this dismal disorder when he tells Yudhishthira about the Kshatriyas ruling at the time (*Mbh* 2.13; van Buitenen 2: 57–60). They all descend from Ila and Ikshvaku through the remnants of the Lunar and Solar dynasties that survived destruction by Rama son of Jamadagni. They now comprise 101 lineages ruling in Aryavarta and a vast dispersion of Yayati and Bhoja dynasties. These Yayatis and Bhojas rule beyond Aryavarta, but everyone recognizes their royalty.

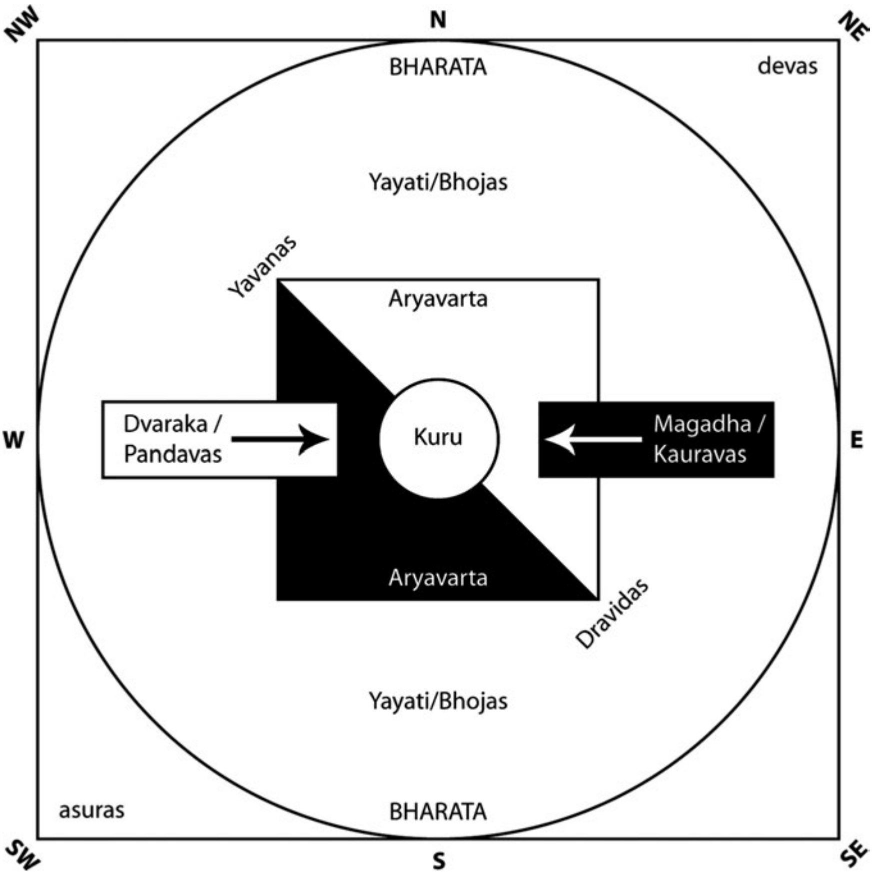


FIGURE 9.8. The disordered mandala. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

Of the Kshatriyas now ruling Aryavarta, Jarasandha belongs to the one hundred and first lineage and has universal sovereignty. Krishna's own cousin, Shishupala, is his marshal and other relatives have also joined him, including Dantavaktra. In the west Bhagadatta, who punished the Yavanas named Mura and Naraka, submits to him even though his heart is loyal to Yudhishthira. The Chedi king claiming to be the Supreme Person with the title "Vasudeva of Pundra" has also gone over to Jarasandha. Only Purujit, Yudhishthira's maternal uncle ruling in the southwest remains loyal. Fear drives many tribes from the east and north toward Purujit in the west and south. Kamsa rules in Mathura near the heartland of Aryavarta, but he scorns his own Yadu people and aligns with Jarasandha and has married his two daughters.

The violent Jarasandha's samraj puts this mandala in extreme disorder. This "son" of a rakshasi ruling from Magadha controls those mandala portions that in cosmic terms belong to devas: the east, northeast, north, and northwest. The Pandava sons of devas and their supporters, including those who flee Jarasandha, dwell in those portions belonging to asuras and rakshasas: the west, southwest, and south. In terms of the royal sadhaka as a microcosmic mandala, Jarasandha is the sense of "This am I" (*akamkarana*) ruling consciousness with a sovereignty that disorders it. Only if Krishna possesses samraj can "This am I" find its true place in the microcosmic mandala. Krishna sports on Bharata to bring both cosmos and microcosmos into order.

In the diagram, the mandala's outer square depicts the mandala as it ought to be: devas (white) are to the northeast and asuras (dark) are to the southwest. This same order applies to Bharata represented by the large circle: the square Realm of Nobles stands at the center and the descendents of Yayati and the Bhojas rule beyond it—most important are the Yavanas and the Dravidas. But Bharata's order is inversed. The (dark) Jarasandha rules from Magadha in the (light) east, and Krishna protects his (light) opponents in the (dark) west. Moreover, Krishna's relatives Shishupala and Dantavaktra lead his (dark) family opponents in alighment with Jarasandha, while Duryodhana leads his (dark) Kuru opponents in alignment with Shishupala. This leaves the (light) Yudhishthira leading the sons of Pandu in alignment with Krishna. But these forces of light and darkness mix in complex and baffling ways. Krishna's (light) army will fight against him on Duryodhana's (dark) side, and so will the acharya Drona and "grandfather" Bhishma dressed brilliantly in white. And the Pandava's eldest but unknown brother, Karna, will choose Duryodhana's darkness over Yudhishthira's light even though Surya the sun is his father. Yet (dark) Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, will lead Magadha's (dark) armies on the side of the (light) Pandavas.

This opposition between (dark) Magadha in the (light) east and (light) Dvaraka in the (dark) west condenses onto the Kuru battlefield after Jarasandha is dead. The central circle represents this battleground and the complex problem the war is to solve. The war begins on the first day of the light half of

the year's darkest month called Karttika. The (light) Pandavas stand with Krishna in the (dark) west and face the (dark) sons of Kuru in the (light) east; the (dark) Kauravas stand in the (light) east and face the (light) sons of Pandu in the (dark) west. As the war conches sound, Krishna teaches Arjuna the *Bhagavad-gita*. The solution to the problem appears on the eighteenth day of battle in the dark half of Karttika. The (dark) Kaurava forces are almost entirely wiped out and lie strewn around the Kuru battlefield as their women mourn. The (light) Pandavas led by Yudhishthira now have sovereignty over what is left, east and west. Yudhishthira's rajasuya will confirm his samraj just in time for the coming Kali Yuga.

Yet another meaning of this panel lies in the theme of the horse. Four horses appear in panels on the sanctum, two on the west and two on the east. The two on the west are victims: The asura Keshin is about to be split in half by Krishna, and the priest who will butcher Bali's horse venerates it. The two on the east pull chariots: Akrura's horse is hitched to the chariot carrying Krishna and Balarama, and the horse in Yudhishthira's rajasuya stands ready to pull his. Both of the latter face south toward Mathura depicted in this panel, where no horse is depicted, but a "horselike" victim is implied. After Krishna kills Kamsa, Bhima in Magadha splits Jarasandha's body in half as if he were Keshin.

This visual play highlights Kamsa's death because it leads to Jarasandha's death. Krishna's slaughter of Kamsa in Mathura and Bhima's later slaughter of Jarasandha in Magadha function as a narrative unit setting the stage for Yudhishthira's rajasuya, illustrated by the final panel of the southern sequence. That panel implies much that is well known but not depicted: the Pandavas' thirteen years of exile, the Great War of eighteen days, and Yudhishthira's patronage of three horse sacrifices to purify him of the sin of slaughtering kinsmen. These events have parallels in Nandivarman's life, as we noted in chapter 4.[17]

Panel 24: Yudhishthira Dons Boar-skin Shoes at His Rajasuya

THE STORY. Significant events leading to the episode this panel depicts are illustrated by Panels 21 and 22, and are discussed in chapter 10. The event portrayed here takes place during Yudhishthira's rajasuya, on the first five days of Chaitra, the first month of the year. But we learn about the event from Bhishma after the Great War has ended (*BP* 1.9.30–42). After the winter solstice and just before he dies, Bhishma sees Krishna; his skin is dark, he has four arms, and he wears a yellow garment. Bhishma prays to him and recollects seven of the roles Janardana has "played' for his own pleasure: 1) a member of the Satvata clan of Yadus; 2) Arjuna's friend; 3) teacher of the *Bhagavad-gita*; 4) warrior on the battlefield and Bhishma's enemy; 5) Arjuna's charioteer; 6) a gopa loved by gopis; and 7) honored guest at Yudhishthira's rajasuya. Bhishma recalls that during Krishna's "play" as honored guest, the

people who had gathered there gazed with wonder and delight at him, the One who resides in the hearts of all living beings. This panel depicts their gaze.

The rite depicted here takes place between Yudhishthira's unction and his chariot drive. It is the donning of slippers or shoes made from the skin of a boar. The shoes are slipped onto the feet of the "newborn" king, and thereafter he will wear them whenever his feet touch the ground. Later he will ascend the throne, he will watch the ritual game of dice, and he will listen as priests recite the story of Harishchandra and Shunahshepa. The rajasuya concludes when he distributes the required ritual gifts and takes his final bath.

In Yudhishthira's case, however, the bath that ends his "birth" as king leads to the major episodes of the *Mahabharata*, which include: 1) Duryodhana's humiliation in the Indraprastha palace; 2) two gambling matches at Hastinapura; 3) the Pandavas' thirteen years of exile; 4) the Pandavas' battle with the Kauravas for eighteen days; 5) Krishna teaching Arjuna the *Bhagavadgita* on the first day of battle; 6) the Pandavas' disastrous victory over the Kauravas; 7) the death of Bhishma after the winter solstice; and 8) three horse sacrifices Yudhishthira sponsors to purify himself of the many and great sins generated by this immense slaughter of family. Only then does Yudhishthira ascend the throne of samraj (*BP* 1.8.5–6; 1.9).

THE PANEL. The figures in the panel face eastward (Figures 9.9, 9.10). Yudhishthira, the yajamana sponsor, has a mustache and he may be unshaved due to the many days he has been consecrated to the rites. The panel is badly damaged, but Yudhishthira's dress is distinctive; it reveals that he has already been anointed and born into the might and power known as kshatra. He wears the same ritual garments Pallavamalla wore at his unction as Nandivarman, as depicted on the southern prakara wall and discussed above. A garment wrapped around the legs represents the amnion, the sac enclosing the fetus in fluid, the "inner caul of kshatra." A wide cloth tied around his abdomen represents the chorion, a thick membrane of the placenta, the "outer caul of kshatra." A wide cloth wrapped around his waist at the height of the navel is a turban that represents the placenta, the "womb of kshatra." A headband or turban serves as the "navel of kshatra," where the placenta and fetus connect. In the depiction of Pallavamalla, this headband appears to wrap around his forehead to descend as cords crossing his chest, perhaps as the umbilicus. In both depictions the hair is bound, but left exposed at the top, for the waters of the unction must touch the hair on his head, which will not be cut thereafter.[18]

To Yudhishthira's right stands Yajnavalkya with his hair piled up on top of his head. Yajnavalkya is in the line of Vishvamitra through Shunahshepa, whose story concludes the rajasuya. According to Bhishma, Yajnavalkya receives Vedic knowledge from Surya the Sun, receives and edits the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, and teaches Bhagavata theology to Janaka.[19] In the *Mahabharata* he is the principal adhvaryu priest in charge of these rajaysuya ceremonies (*Mbh*



FIGURE 9.9. Panel 24: Yudhishthira dons boar-skin shoes at his rajasuya. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

2.30.35; van Buitenen 2: 88). The *Bhagavata Purana* does not name Yajnavalkya, but represents him in this role by means of the first priest at the rajasuya, Vyasa Dvaipayana: Vyasa's disciple is Vaishampayana, whose disciple is Yajnavalkya (*BP* 10.74.7–9; 12.6.51–64).

To Yajnavalkya's right stands Yudhishthira's wife Draupadi, wearing a crown. She forms the anjalimudra at her left side, and looks toward the right as if to avoid looking straight ahead at Krishna, perhaps as a gesture of modesty. Her posture also suggests her passive role in this long ceremony performed by men, for it requires her presence but gives her little to do: As the wife of the sponsor she makes him "whole," and represents the majesty (*shri*) and realm (*bhumi*) he now possesses.

The heir apparent, Arjuna's son Abhimanyu, stands behind Yudhishthira to his left; he appears to be speaking to him over his left shoulder (mirroring Balarama speaking to Krishna over his right shoulder on this same eastern side in Panel 12). Abhimanyu's right side disappears behind Yudhishthira, but his left hand appears to hold an unidentified object next to his chest. To Abhimanyu's left stands a horse; its small size means he stands at a distance



FIGURE 9.10. Left to right: Draupadi, Yajnavalkya, Yudhishthira, and Abhimanyu. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

(repeating the distant perspective of the horse in Panel 14). The horse may be one of three brought to stand behind the chatvala pit, which is dug outside the sacrificial arena (*mahavedi*) to the northeast; the chariot will start its clockwise drive from there (Heesterman 1957: 128–129, 133–139). The loose earth dug up from this pit is used to construct the altars for the sacrifice (Sen 1982: 68, plans 5–6), and piles of it appear in front of the horse. The digging of this chatvala pit is analogous to a boar digging up soil; and it evokes the story of Boar carrying Goddess Earth upward, a theme we shall discuss below.

Finally, a badly damaged man kneels on his right knee in front of Yudhishthira, and stretches out his left arm as if holding something in his hand (Figure 9.11). He keeps his right hand at his chest. Since objects are only exceptionally given with the left hand during rituals, he must be holding the boar-skin shoes, which his poised right hand will fit to Yudhishthira's feet.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel signifies the murti Govinda; the rite of the boar-skin shoes it portrays alludes to the title Govinda, which Indra bestowed on Gopala Krishna after he had used the mountain Govardhana as an umbrella against Indra's rains (*BP* 10.24–27). The word *govinda* may be



FIGURE 9.11. Yudhishthira dons boar-skin shoes (detail, prior to repair). IFDI.

glossed as "the Indra (*inda*) of cows (*go*)" to denote Indra's subordination to Krishna's sovereignty. But a Bhagavata tradition says *govinda* also refers to Boar's rescue of Goddess Earth from the dark underworld waters, for it means the "rescuer (*vinda*) of earth (*go*) who was taken into a secret place" (Bhattar 1983: name 543). (The murti Govinda pairs with the murti Madhava. Madhava ends the sequence by way of the north and Govinda ends the sequence by way of the south. Madhava is early morning and Govinda is late morning. Madhava is the month Magha (Maci) and Govinda is the month Phalguna (Panguni). Both embody the Pre-eminently Mighty formation facing east, because Madhava is virya and Govinda is aishvarya.)

This panel thus alludes to the story of the Boar named Emusha (the Terrible) and his "rescue" of Earth. The story goes as follows. Vishvakarma, son of Bhuvana, wants to gain all of Earth and sponsors a sacrifice for this end, which Kashyapa performs. In the *Shatapatha Brahmana* it is the "Sacrifice of Everything" (*sarvamedha*), and in the *Aitareya Brahmana* it is the "Great Unction" (*mahabhisheka*). Vishvakarma promises Kashyapa that after he has conquered Earth he will give her to him. Vishvakarma achieves his goal and then sponsors a horse sacrifice, as he should. But Goddess Earth objects to being given away by him or anyone else: "Vishvakarma! No mortal is allowed to give me away, but you have. So I'll plunge deep down into the sea and make your promise to Kashyapa fruitless." Earth then sinks into the waters as a mere handful of loose soil. But the Boar Emusha dives in and brings her up. She is "his heart's delight" and he spreads her out and they beget offspring. Earth is now a mother and Emusha the Boar a father, a "master of progeny" (*SB* 8.7.9.14–15; *AB* 8.21).

Yudhishthira in this panel is analogous to Emusha the Boar, and his Aryavarta is analogous to Earth. According to the *Baudhayana Shrautasutra*, the "newborn" king puts on boar-skin shoes and then says, as if to Emusha the Boar, "You are the ardor of cattle. May my ardor be like yours." Then he looks at Earth and says, "I revere Mother Earth. May I not hurt Mother Earth, may Mother Earth not hurt me" (Heesterman 1957: 130 rev.).

The king's first statement addressed to Emusha the Boar, in whose shoes he now walks, requests majestic wealth (*shri*). The king asks for the intense energy or ardor of a boar, because intense energy is: 1) the ability to attract cows through the abundant fat they have in common, and 2) the ability to combine their fat. Their combined fat is wealth (*SB* 5.4.3.19–20). The king's second statement requests a stable rule. Standing in the boar-skin shoes he looks down and says, "Mother Earth! Please injure me not, nor I you!" The king is quoting Varuna during his first and paradigmatic rajasuya. After Varuna is "born" through his rites he becomes something great, and Earth is afraid he will tear her apart the way a boar does. Varuna is likewise afraid that Earth will shake him off. "Mother Earth! Please injure me not, nor I you," Varuna says; and he enters into a friendly relation with her, "for a mother does not injure her son, nor does a son injure his mother" (*SB* 5.4.3.20–21).

The analogy of the king to Emusha the Boar and his realm to Earth, and Varuna's address to Earth as his Mother, reveal four ideas about kingship in the rajasuya: 1) The king's realm is his wife, and his subjects their progeny; 2) a brutish king may tear apart his realm; 3) a realm may "shake off" a brutish king; 4) the king's realm is his mother. The rite of the boar-skin shoes appeals to this last idea, for if the realm is the king's wife he may be brutish and his progeny may rebel against him. But if the realm is the king's mother their relationship will be mutually dependent, caring, and protective, because this is the relation of a mother and her son.

The story of Emusha the Boar here at the end of the southern sequence alludes back to the story of Bali and Vamana at its beginning. There are three allusions: 1) The rishi Kashyapa plays a role in both stories: At the beginning he fathers Vamana through his wife Aditi, and here at the end he serves as priest to Vishvakarma. 2) The two sacrifices attributed to Vishvakarma match those sponsored by Bali, the "All Conquering" (*vishvajita*), and the "Great Unction" (*mahabhisheka*). And 3) Vishvakarma, like Bali, possesses the whole Earth, loses her, and cannot fulfill his promised gift; in Vishvakarma's case it is his promise to Kashyapa, and in Bali's case it is his promise to Kashyapa's son Vamana.

Finally, in this panel, Yudhishthira represents Nandivarman's historical experience. After his rajasuya, Yudhishthira is exiled by Duryodhana for thirteen years. He regains his throne through the eighteen days of the Great War. But before he assumes the throne of samraj, he performs three horse sacrifices in order to purify himself of the many sins his slaughter of kinsmen produced. Similarly, sometime after Nandivarman's unction as Kanchipuram's ruler ca. 731, the attack made by the Chalukyan Vikramaditya in support of Nandivarman's rival sent him into exile for about twelve to fourteen years. In the early 750s his Rashtrakuta father-in-law, Dantidurga, enabled him to return to Kanchipuram, where he received Bhagavata consecrations. Like Yudhishthira, he had to fight kinsmen to secure his throne. Like Yudhishthira he also had to purify himself of the sins of killing kinsmen. But instead of sponsoring horse sacrifices, Nandivarman sponsored dana rites at the temple for the Bhagavan in Nandipuram (Tirumangai records these dana ceremonies in *PT* 5.10).

Let us end with the question, In whose place does the viewer of this panel stand? Bhishma gave the answer as he lay dying on the battlefield of the Great War. When Bhishma saw Krishna standing before him with four arms and wearing his yellow garment he prayed to him (*BP* 1.9.30). The final request of his life was to join Krishna as he now saw him—which was as he appeared to the assembly earlier gathered for Yudhishthira's rajasuya. There they had gazed at Krishna with the veneration and delight we see in these sculpted figures gazing toward the viewer (*BP* 1.9.41). The viewer stands in the place of Krishna.

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10

The Southern Panels of the Southern Path

"The Path of the Southern Doctrine"

Like the panels of the northern sequence, the six panels of the southern sequence, facing south, move sequentially west to east, which in this case is counterclockwise, a normally inauspicious rotation. They likewise explain the connection of the corner panel on the south that faces west to the corner panel on the south that faces east, in terms of a consecrated ruler following a sadhana for the sake of bhukti, or worldly prosperity, which may also include mukti, or emancipation from samsara. This sequence probably illustrates what Prahlada calls "The Path of the Southern Doctrine."[1] How does a consecrated Shudra king, who rules like Bali under Narayana's protection, have his sense of "This is mine" destroyed, and then its root sense of "This am I" torn apart? These six panels represent the answer as stages in a sadhana that appears to draw upon rites found in the *Jayakha-samhita* and *Ahirbudnya-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama.

As the northern sequence does, these panels use crucial events in various stories to illustrate these stages. Moreover, the west-facing corner panel of this path does not lead narratively to the east-facing corner panel. In the *Bhagavata Purana*, the story of Dwarf protecting Bali in Sutala does not lead directly to the story of Krishna slaying Kamsa. The six south-facing panels we shall study in this chapter explain the connection between Dwarf and Kamsa's death. They begin their depictions at the southwest corner of the temple's mandala, the most inauspicious domain of sunset and of Nirriti's disintegration.

These south-facing panels, like those that face north, fall into two sets of three divided by the central slit opening. It marks

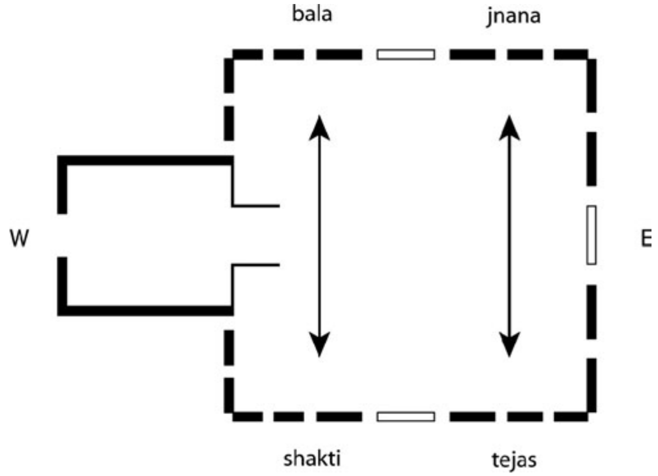


FIGURE 10.1. Pairing of bhagas along the north-south axis. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

the position of the Unobstructed sitting below and facing south. Vidura describes him to Uddhava as "Aniruddha, the cow that grants all desires for Satvatas, who think of him as the fourth principle of pure being, made of mind and the womb of sound" (*BP* 3.1.34). The Unobstructed is the source of mantras employed in prayoga rites to protect the royal sadhaka's well-being until his lifetime is over.

The first three panels, beginning at the southwest corner, signify the Unobstructed's potency (*shakti*) embodied by mantra—for example, the twelve-syllable mantra *Om namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*, which Aditi employed in her liquids vow (*payovrata*). The second three panels, ending at the southeast corner, signify the Unbstructed's brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) released when mantra is activited through prayoga ceremonies—for example, tejas borm in the form of Dwarf from Aditi's shakti womb.

In this arrangement, viewers encounter panels denoting intent (*kriyashakti*) before the panels denoting effect (*bhutishakti*), which is opposite to the arrangement on the north. On the north-south axis, bala panels are paired with shakti panels, and jnana panels are paired with tejas panels (Figure 10.1).

Panel 17: Indra Disrupts King Prithu's Horse Sacrifice

THE STORY. Maitreya's long telling of Prithu's story to Vidura in the *Bhagavata Purana* develops the story in the *Satapatha Brahmana* of the first man engendered a raja in imitation of Varuna (*SB* 5.3.5; 5.4.3.2; 5.4.3.21. *BP* 4.13–23). It tells how kingship is established in the first Manu Term of this Daytime of Boar, but on the basis of a faulty horse sacrifice. Its sponsor is Anga, but he has

no son and is therefore not qualified to have it performed on his behalf, and for this reason no deva comes to the rites. To remedy the problem, Anga worships Vishnu for the sake of a son. Vishnu appears holding a golden pot of milk rice (*payasa*). He smells the payasa and gives it to Anga's queen to eat; she becomes pregnant. The son she begets, however, takes after her father, who is Death (Mrityu). The boy grows into a self-centered man pitted against dharma, and he comes to be known as Vena (Longing). Unable to bear his son's tyranny, Anga leaves for the forest, and with an empty throne the realm is likely to collapse (*BP* 4.13.21–49). Against their better judgment, Bhrigu and other rishis appoint Vena as master. But this only increases his tyranny. Vena abolishes all sacrifices, terrorizes the population like a frenzied elephant free of the goad, and demands, because the king embodies all devas, that he be the object of sacrificial worship. The rishis have no other recourse than to kill him with the mantra *Hum*. Vena's mother preserves his corpse by having it embalmed with mantras and medicines. In the absence of a Master of Earth (*bhupati*), robbery and murder arise and plunder pushes society toward ruin (*BP* 4.14.1–40).

The rishis conclude that they must have a ruler of the Anga lineage, so they take Vena's preserved corpse and churn it as if churning wood to give birth to Fire (Agni) for a Vedic sacrifice. They begin with Vena's thighs. From this churning arises a servile man, black-skinned and short. He asks what he should do, and the rishis say "sit down" (*nishada*), so he is known as Nishada. His descendents, the Naishadas, inherit Vena's defiled dregs called kalmasha and dwell in hills and forests (*BP* 4.14.41–46). The seers now churn the arms of the corpse. From this churning arise portions (*amsha*) of Vishnu and Lakshmi as the disciplined protectors named Prithu (Expansive) and Archi (Luster). When Brahma appears he recognizes the mace insignia on Prithu's left hand, lotus marks on the soles of his feet, the wheel portion on his palm, and knows he is a part of Hari.

Prithu is consecrated raja through rites originally followed by Varuna and now followed by every ruler after Prithu. Devas bestow on him and Archi all royal attributes in their most ideal forms. As a portion (*amsha*) of Sri Vishnu, Archi is female matter (*prakriti*) and embodies both majesty (*shri*) and realm (*bhumi*), and Prithu is male consciousness (*purusha*) and embodies the atman (*BP* 4.15.7-21; 16.8; 4.15.7-21; 16.8). He is the all-pervading witness of majesty and realm (*BP* 4.16.12 and 19). The nobles' realm (*aryavarta*) derives from their rule, and Prithu is its paradigmatic raja. He is the first to rule Bharata divided between order and disorder, between "civilized" (*dharmika*) peoples living in Aryavarta's villages, towns, and cities, and "uncivilized" (*adharmika*) Naishadas living southeast of civilization as aliens embodying cruel and arrogant defilement (*kalmasha*) *BP* 4.15.43–16.6).

Singers now proclaim Prithu's glory and future deeds as the embodiment of the powers of the World Protectors, Hari with the body of a "human deva" (*naradeva*). They summarize his career: He will rule the mandala of Earth,

traverse her in his chariot like Surya, milk her in the shape of a cow, level her, and keep her safe. He will perform one hundred horse sacrifices, and during the last one, Indra will steal the horse. And then Bhagavan Sanatkumara will instruct him in knowledge of the supreme *brahman* (*BP* 4.16.1–27).

This panel illustrates an episode during Prithu's final horse sacrifice, which takes place as follows. After Prithu levels Goddess Earth and adopts her as his daughter, he sponsors a horse sacrifice, the first king to do so successfully. This is the first of one hundred performed at Brahmavarta, Svayambhuva Manu's realm where the Sarasvati River flows eastward. If Prithu completes all of them, his status on Earth will be greater even than Indra's in Heaven. The one-hundredth ceremony is therefore an amazing assembly, and Bhagavan Hari, the Ruler, the atman of all, the guru of all worlds, is visibly present as the Master of Sacrifice (*BP* 4.19.1–9).

Indra is jealous, of course, and disrupts Prithu's final sacrifice by stealing the horse. The rishi Atri sees him race through the sky disguised as an imposter (*pakhanda*)—someone who foolishly believes unrighteousness (*adharma*) to be righteousness (*dharma*). Indra's hair is matted, his body is smeared with ashes, and he is nearly naked (probably the guise of an Ajivika ascetic). Prithu's son chases him, but when he sees Indra's garb he thinks his body is righteous and does not release his arrow. Atri cries out to his son, "Slay him, slay him," and his son now charges Indra "like Jatayu after Ravana," but Indra disappears (*BP* 4.19.30–38). The son brings the horse back to his father, and the rishis give him the title Vijitashva (Victorious of the Horse). Indra next creates dense darkness and steals the horse again; and again Atri sees him rush through the sky. Prithu's son Vijitashva pursues him as before, and again does not harm him, for this time Indra carries a human skull and the skull-topped khatvanga staff. Atri once more urges Prithu's son to kill him, Indra again disappears, and the son again returns the horse to his father. This repeats until Indra's guises include "the naked, the red-robed, and the others" (*BP* 4.19.25). (In the Kali Yuga these will be naked Jaina shramanas, red-robed Buddhist bhikshus, and Ajivika, Kapalika, and other ascetics judged to be outside dharma.)

Prithu is furiously determined to kill Indra, but the priests remind him that during the sacrifice nothing except the consecrated victim may be slain. Nevertheless, they offer to use mantras to force Indra to come to the sacrifice, and then they will use *him* as the victim. Prithu agrees. But Brahma appears and puts a stop to this plan with two arguments. First, this Indra cannot be killed because he is named Yajna or Sacrifice, and is the Bhagavan in miniature (*BP* 4.20.30). Second, this attempt will force Hari as this Indra named Yajna to create more imposters and compound disorder, for many find imposter or pakhanda teachings attractive. Let Prithu be satisfied with ninety-nine horse sacrifices, Brahma advises, and he will be more famous than Indra. Prithu should use his own righteous rule to overcome the maya this Indra

named Yajna uses to create "terrible imposter paths," which weaken righteousness (*BP* 4.19.30–38).

Prithu is persuaded and gives up his final horse sacrifice. The Master of Sacrifice, who is satisfied by sacrifices, now appears as the Bhagavan Vaikuntha together with the Indra named Yajna. He tells Prithu to rule all his subjects without violence and with equity, judging them according to their differences as people who are superior, ordinary, or inferior. All the while Prithu can barely see Vaikuntha through his tears of devotion, but when he finally wipes them away he sees him standing before him like a human: His feet are on the ground and one of his arms rests on the shoulder of Garuda (as he appears on the porch below at Panel SP3 discussed in chapter 12). Vaikuntha offers Prithu a boon, but all he asks for is to be constantly absorbed in serving Him the way Goddess Shri is, even if it means that he and the Mother of the Moving Universe will be rivals in his service. Then Vaikuntha disappears, and Prithu returns to his capital between the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers. Prithu now exercises his rod of discipline over everyone on Earth's seven concentric continents, excepting the clan of Brahmins and those who belong to the "Lineage of the Unfallen," who are probably the Satvatas (*BP* 4.20.19–38; 4.21.11–14). In sum, the Bhagavan playing three roles—Prithu with Archi, the Indra named Yajna, and Vaikuntha—establishes that the only difference between Prithu as the Indra of people on Earth and Yajna as the Indra of devas in Heaven is merely one horse sacrifice out of a hundred. Ideally, a narendra is a very close approximation to a devendra.

The Panel. King Prithu and the rishi Atri move vigorously at the bottom of this badly damaged panel (Figure 10.2), agitated by events taking place above them. King Prithu wears a tall crown, is dressed royally, and faces forward to the south, his head tilted slightly westward and his face gazing to the southeast. His left arm extends out at his side and bends up, but its hand is missing; perhaps it pointed to the scene above. His right arm hangs down, and his right hand rests on the thigh of his straight right leg, which bears his weight as he raises his left leg up, pointing his knee eastward. A damaged object at the left side of his chest is unidentified. East of Prithu is the rishi Atri, whose head, crowned with a pile of matted locks, appears to have large earrings. His posture resembles Prithu's, though he leans to the east. The back of his open right hand at the middle of his chest gestures alarm as his left hand rests on his upraised left thigh.

In the panel's upper part the small figure of Prithu's son Vijitashva, with two arms, chases Indra to the east. Prithu's son faces southeast, his crowned head leans westward, and his right leg stretches westward as he lifts his left leg eastward in the chase. His right hand reaches to the west and grips a sword that extends diagonally up and eastward to the top of his crown. His left arm



FIGURE 10.2. Panel 17: Indra disrupts King Prithu's horse sacrifice. IFDI.

extends westward to hold a shield with its face turned away from the viewer in what may be a signal of distress.

Indra named Yajna, with a chubby body in the guise of a pakhanda ascetic, wears nothing but a slender loincloth under the fold of his belly. He is in front and below Vijitashva on what appears to be a ledge, running toward the southeast in a posture resembling that of his pursuer. He tilts his head westward, but his crown of matted hair is damaged. He extends his broken left arm eastward as his right arm reaches westward in front of Vijitashva's left knee.

The only apparent difference between Maitreya's telling of this episode in the *Bhagavata Purana* and its depiction here is that Maitreya says that Prithu's son pursues Indra with arrows instead of a sword and shield. But the discrepancy vanishes if we understand the depicted sword and shield as illustrating Maitreya's statement that after he abandons his arrows, Prithu's son charges Indra "like Jatayu after Ravana"; the depicted sword operates like Jatayu's talon or beak (*BP* 4.19.14–16).

Indra's "imposter" guise is a body naked except for a loincloth. The only other males who wear similar loincloths in the sculptures on this Vishnu-house are the wrestlers facing east in the Madhava murti panel on this floor, and the radical ascetic (*avadhuta*) Dattatreya facing south on the bottom floor. Dattatreya's avadhuta loincloth matches Indra's loincloth here and hints at "imposter" elements in that depiction of Dattatreya, which we shall discuss in chapter 15.

The Panel's Meanings. The panel identifies the king as a portion of Vishnu ruling on Earth as an Indra of Men, whose ideal status is a little less than the Indra of devas in Heaven. It also represents the origin of kingship in Vishnu's response to the disintegration (*nirriti*) represented by this southwest corner.

During the first Manu Term, Vena's longing to be the only ruler and only object of worship produces his corpse, and with it the disintegration of civilization. An integrated civilization is then born from its corpse by means of rishis "churning" it as they do wood to gain fire for a sacrifice, or soma "milk" to gain pure soma for an offering. The civilization thus born from the corpse of "longing" is social order and disorder joined in an opposition, one that replicates the opposition of Vena's arms and thighs joined at his navel center. First, from the thighs of sexual lust emerges disorder as the Naishadas of the uncivilized wild; they embody kalmasha defilement. Then, from the arms of physical power and action emerges order as Prithu and Archi of civilized settlements; they establish majestic wealth, sustain orderly settlements, and discipline the disorder innate to the "wild" Naishadas. Further discussion of Prithu's story appeas in Appendix 3.

The story of Prithu and his wife Archi in the *Bhagavata Purana* develops the *Satapatha Brahmana*'s account with themes introduced in the story of Bali

and Dwarf (discussed in chapter 9): Aditi's liquid's vow to produce a son, Boar rescuing Goddess Earth from Rasatala, and a horse sacrifice. In at least four ways it also continues the theme of Nirriti's inaugural rites prescribed by the *Satapatha Brahmana* for a location that corresponds to this southwest corner, where sunset and the Kali Yuga begin.

First, Maitreya overhears Krishna tells this story to Vidura as part of his last teaching on the Sarasvati River at Prabhasa. His Yadava clan has already destroyed itself and he is about to be shot in the heel by Decay (*jara*), the same rakshasa that joins the two pieces of Jarasandha pulled apart by Bhima. Krishna calls this teaching the *Bhagavatam* and says that he previously taught it to Brahma in the lotus at the primordial emission of the universe (*adisarga*) (*BP* 3.4.9–11).

Second, the Kali Yuga begins after Krishna leaves the earth. Uddhava wanders to the Yamuna River, meets Vidura and tells him about Krishna's final teaching and his demise. Vidura asks Uddhava to tell him the *Bhagavatam*, but Uddhava says that before he died Krishna told Maitreya to teach it to Vidura (*BP* 3.4.26). To find Maitreya, Vidura goes to the Door of the Ganga (*gangadvara*). There Maitreya tells him this *Bhagavatam* that is simultaneously the first and the last of Vasudeva Krishna's teachings (*BP* 3–4).

Third, Vidura as Maitreya's audience belongs to this south-facing side. Vidura is sired by Vyasa along with Pandu and Dhritarashtra, but his mother is a Shudra handmaid and he is classified a Shudra. Yet he is highly learned in dharma, because, as Maitreya notes, Vidura is the human incarnation of Yama deva, and Yama, whose kingdom is in the south, is both lord of the dead and master of dharma (*BP* 3.5.20).

Fourth and finally, Prithu's story falls within the *Bhagavata Purana*'s narrative about Daksha and his sacrifice (*BP* 5), and Daksha appears in this same southwest region on the porch below (see chapter 12). Daksha's story in turn tells of Rudra Shiva as Vasudeva's devotee, and Shiva is the master of rakshasas from the south.

We may assume that these six panels facing south follow the same distinctions between sheaths or persons that constitute the human being as are followed by the panels facing north, as discussed in chapter 6. These are: 1) the sheath of gross matter made of "the taste of food" (*annarasa*); 2) the sheath of subtle matter made of breath (*prana*); 3) the sheath of finer subtle matter made of mind (*manas*); 4) the sheath of still finer subtle matter made of discriminative consciousness (*vijnana*); 5) the sheath of the finest matter of all made of joy or bliss (*ananda*). The panels represent these five sheaths in the sequence moving from west to east. This first panel, therefore, represents the first sheath, the body made of gross matter (*sthulasharira*). The idea of the king as a Vishnu and an Indra of Men, therefore, applies only to the king's gross physical body, not to any of the sheaths that constitute his subtle physical body (*sukshmasharira*). In other words, he appears to his subjects as a Vishnu and an

Indra, but not to himself, for his consciousness remains entirely human. The goal of this royal sadhana—apparently called the Path of the Southern Doctrine—is to attain true sovereignty by purifying the sheaths of the king's subtle body so that, unlike Hiranyakashipu, he never thinks of himself as "Vishnu" or as "Indra" the way his subjects may do. In other words, this sadhana allows the Bhagavan to slay the internal "Kamsa" that says "This realm is mine," and then slays the internal "Jarasandha" that says "I am this king."

Moreover, the designers of this Vishnu-house use the position of this panel at the southwest corner of disintegration and its identification with the king's gross physical body to comment on non-Vedic ascetics residing at the time in the Pallava realm. These Buddhist, Jaina, and Ajivika shramanas and Shaiva Kapalikas are identified here as deceitful people who appear to follow dharma, but in fact disrupt dharma's social order based on Veda and its animal sacrifices. They derive from Vishnu in the mode of an Indra in Heaven ironically named Sacrifice (Yajna), but they teach attractive doctrines like ahimsa or noninjury, which undermine Vedic sacrifice as the basis of civilization. Like the Naishadas their bodies are defiled, for the word *pakhanda* is glossed as *papa-khanda*, interpreted to mean fragments of sin; and each of these pakhanda bodies is a fragment of this sin (*BP* 4.19.22–25). Moreover, like Naishadas living in defiled disorder, the adharma of these pakhanda religions illuminates the boundaries of dharma civilization.

In the Seventh Manu Term, at the beginning of the present Kali Yuga, Vishnu appears as one of these pakhandas, as "Buddha the Pure who deludes the Daityas and Danavas" (*BP* 10.40.22). The Daitya and Danava asuras he deludes are the pakhandas that originate in the First Manu Term, as depicted here. Vishnu appears as Buddha the Pure (and as Mahavira and others) to delude these asura "bodies of sin" by organizing them into systems of doctrine and discipline that harness their threat to dharma. The practitioners and devotees of these "asura" religions exist in the Pallava realm in great numbers, but they are subject to the dharma sustained by the king, who rules according to the paradigm of Prithu. Nevertheless, Kanchipuram's rajavihara or royal Buddhist monastery, which Mahendravarman notes in his *Mattavilasa Prahasana* (ca. 600), the tall Ashoka Stupa reported by Hsuan Tsang ca. 640, and (perhaps) the shrine for Manimekhalai noted by Cittalai Cattanar in his *Manimekalai* (ca. 550)—all of which were south of Kanchi's rampart—testify to the high (if ambivalent) social and political status of these "asura pakhandas" in the Pallava realm at the time Nandivarman Pallavamalla built this Vishnu-house for his Master.

The first step on the Path of the Southern Doctrine, then, is the ruler's proper consecration as the Peoples' Indra. But, as Prithu illustrates, a visceral greed for possessive sovereignty inevitably will emerge in the raja, an instinctual desire for autonomous power generated by the sense of "This is mine" and "This am I" embedded within gross body consciousness. Elimination of this

greed in favor of Krishna's sovereign authority is the second step on the path and the subject of the next panel.

Panel 18: Krishna Enters Naraka's Palace Where 16,000 Royal Virgins Are Held Captive

THE STORY. According to Shuka, who narrates this story to the emperor Parikshit, the asura Naraka is one of several examples of rulers intoxicated by wealth and prosperity (*BP* 10.59). Naraka is born when Boar rescues Goddess Earth from Rasatala, but he turns out to be an asura, presumably because his mother as earth (*prithvi*) is matter's densest and darkest mode. But Boar promises not to kill their son without his mother's consent.[2]

With this advantage, Naraka decides to conquer the three worlds of birth and death: earth, underworld, and heaven. On earth he defeats the ruling kings and captures more than sixteen thousand virgins, whom he keeps in his fortified capital, Pragjyotishpura, the City of Eastern Light. In the underworld he captures Varuna's umbrella of sovereignty. In heaven he seizes Aditi's earrings and Indra's throne. In possession of all these emblems of sovereignty, Naraka, son of Goddess Earth, is the bhupati ruling from Pragjyotishpura.

Indra complains to Krishna about Goddess Earth's son, and the lord of Dvaraka resolves to act. He and his wife Satyabhama (True Luster) mount Garuda's back and fly from their city in the western ocean to Naraka's heavily fortified capital in the mountains to the east. When they arrive Krishna breaks through its barriers with his mace, arrows, wheel, sword, and the sound of his conch. He kills the five-headed asura named Mura, his seven sons, and then Naraka's entire army. When he finally cuts off Naraka's head it falls to the ground, bright with its crown and earrings (*BP* 10.59.22).

Goddess Earth now appears to Krishna with gifts and venerates him as having four arms, as he does in this panel, three of which hold the conch, the wheel, and the mace (*BP* 10.59.23–31). She venerates him as the Bhagavan, as Vasudeva, as Vishnu, as the Person, and as the Primordial Seed "full of awakened consciousness" (*BP* 10.59.27). She acknowledges that she (earth) and the other four elements (water, fire, wind, and space), in all their evolved combinations, are merely imposed upon him, the Bhagavan who is "not-two" (*advitiya bhagavan*) (*BP* 10.59.30). She then asks Krishna to accept Naraka's son, her grandson, as a refugee (*prapanna*) to replace his father as bhupati. She asks Krishna to place his lotus hand on him, because it destroys kalmasha, and Krishna does (*BP* 10.59.31–32). This is the rite of Vishnuhasta.

Afterward Krishna enters Naraka's opulant capital and finds the more than sixteen thousand royal virgins the asura ruler had kidnapped. Each one is immediately infatuated with him and thinks fate (*daiva*) has brought Krishna to be her husband. "May the Ordainer (*dhata*) make him my husband" they all

pray (*BP* 10.59.35), and Krishna responds by having them all dressed gorgeously and sent to Dvaraka in palanquins together with the vast treasure and many horses and chariots Naraka had plundered from other rulers. The Slayer of Keshin (*keshava*) also sends to Dvaraka Naraka's herd of sixty white elephants with four tusks, which belong to the species of Indra's elephant named Airavata (*BP* 10.59.37).

Krishna and Satyabhama do not accompany this booty to Dvaraka. Instead, they go on to Indra's heaven to return Aditi's earrings. While there, Satyabhama sees the Parijata tree that had emerged from the Milk Ocean churning and is now in Indra's court. This beautiful coral tree is one of five kalpatarus in heaven, trees that give whatever fruits are desired, and fragrant crimson blossoms clothe it after it loses its leaves.[3] Satyabhama desires it for her palatial garden in Dvaraka and urges Krishna to uproot it for her. When he begins to do so, Indra and other devas try to stop him, which prompts a fight that leaves Krishna victorious. He takes the Parijata and Satyabhama onto Garuda's back and flies away to Dvaraka, followed by swarms of heaven's honeybees that crave the fragrance and nectar of Parijata blossoms (*BP* 10.59.40). Krishna plants this kalpataru in Satyabhama's garden, just as she had desired.

At this point in his telling, Shuka makes a comment to Parikshit. When Indra begged Krishna for help with Naraka, Krishna gave it, he says, but when Krishna asked Indra for the Parijata tree Indra did not give it, and he even fought Krishna when he tried to take it anyway. "Shame on such deva stupidity," he says, "and shame on such wealth!"(*BP* 10.59.41).

Shuka resumes his story. After he returns with Satyabhama, Krishna properly marries each of the sixteen thousand royal virgins in Dvaraka, all on the same auspicious day (*BP* 10.59.42–45). He gives each one a house and he is in each house simultaneously for the ceremony. He lives as a husband with each wife individually, and each wife serves him herself even though she has a hundred slaves (*BP* 10.59.45). In the morning, Krishna goes out to perform his public role as Dvaraka's ruler and all his forms as husband coalesce into one. When he returns in the evening, this single form divides so that each wife experiences herself as his (*BP* 10.70.17).

THE PANEL. The moment in the story portrayed here appears to be Krishna's entrance into Naraka's palace in Pragjyotishpura, immediately after he placed his hand on the head of Naraka's son to cleanse him of all defilement (Figure 10.3).

In the top half of this damaged panel two women, each with two arms, sit upright with royal ease (Figure 10.4). They represent the sixteen thousand captive virgins he finds inside, all of whom he later marries. The women turn slightly toward each other, but gaze directly forward and have tall crowns. The right leg of the woman on the west is pendent, its knee touching the knee of the woman to her left with its foot pulled back. Her left foot rests flat on her seat,



FIGURE 10.3. Panel 18: Krishna enters Naraka's palace where 16,000 royal virgins are held captive (prior to repair). IFDI.



FIGURE 10.4. Two royal virgins (detail). IFDI.

and her knee supports her left elbow at the level of her chest; her forearm rises upward with her fingers apparently spread apart. Her right hand rests on her right thigh. The woman on the east leans on her left hand placed palm down on her seat. Her right forearm reaches forward to display her open hand bent downward at the wrist. Her pendent left leg touches the other woman' right knee as it stretches westward to touch toes with the latter.

In the lower half of the panel, a crowned man with four arms faces directly forward with legs spread, his weight on his unbent left leg (Figure 10.5). His



FIGURE 10.5. Krishna enters Naraka's palace (detail). IFDI.

right leg rises high enough to rest his toes on the ground at a level higher than his left foot, as if stepping up. Only his right two arms are clearly visible. A second single left arm appears to stretch down at his left side, but his second left arm is not depicted or has disappeared. His two right arms stretch westward and bend at the elbows, the one in back upward and the one in front slightly downward. At first sight his disfigured hands resemble claws.



FIGURE 10.6. The head prior to repair (detail). IFDI.

The remains of the man's head present an interpretive problem. Prior to the restoration of the Vishnu-house in 1997–1998, the damaged head could be interpreted as that of a man with his hair spread out from beneath his crown (Figure 10.6). Or, as interpreted by a drawing of this panel published by Rea in 1909 (Plate 82, fig. 1), it could be interpreted as a man's head with a single face enclosed to his shoulders by a crown and ornaments (Figure 10.7). But when viewed at certain angles and times of day, the damaged sides of the head may seem to be the remains of two faces. This has led some to interpret the figure as Brahma (*EITA* 1.1 Table 9: 73), and in 1997–1998 its head was restored to suggest this identity (Figure 10.8). To the eastern side of the face gazing southward is a damaged mass that has been interpreted as a face, which means there was also a face on the western side, and an unseen one on the northern side, to make four in all.

In my judgment, however, this is Krishna's single head. There are three reasons for this identification. First, all other sculpted panels of this Vishnu-house match events narrated in or alluded to by the *Bhagavata Purana*, some with astonishingly close correspondence. The only event in that compendium that fits the south side's theme of defeating asuras and involves more than one woman is the story of Krishna slaying Naraka. Second, Krishna's victory over



FIGURE 10.7. The head in a drawing of 1909. From Rea 1909.

Naraka, and his defeat of Indra for the sake of the Parijata tree, are two of the events Narada predicts after the most eminent of Savatas has slain Keshin. Others are also depicted on this middle sanctum (see Panel 4 discussed in chapter 6, and *BP* 10.37.11–22, esp. 17). Third, the panel directly below on the bottom floor (Panel S5, chapter 15) depicts the background story to this panel. That panel represents the region of Northern Kuru (Uttarakuru), where Goddess Earth and others worship the Person of Sacrifice, who took the shape of Boar to embody Vedic sacrifices. After he slew the asura Hiranyaksha, he



FIGURE 10.8. The head after repair. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

lifted her out of the waters (*BP* 5.18.31–33). The scene depicted is one described by Brahma and other rishis: The Causal Boar (Karansukara) holds Earth on his tusks like a lotus lifted up from a pond. They proclaim her to be the Mother and him to be the Father, and praise him for instilling his fiery tejas in her to evolve the world (*BP* 3.13.34–45). This panel on the middle floor carries the story forward to Naraka as the asura son of Boar and Earth, whom Krishna slays and replaces with his purified prapanna son.

The Panel's Meanings. First, Naraka the son of Boar and Goddess Earth represents the properly enthroned ruler who, unlike King Prithu, is dominated by greed innate to his earthy body: he wants everything for himself. Naraka's death at Krishna's hands signifies the eradication of this kalmasha from the royal sadhaka. The sadhaka is now a purified prapanna represented by Naraka's son.

Second, the touch of Krishna's hand on the head of Naraka's son presumably represents the Vishnuhasta rite performed by an acharya on his disciple to remove defiling kalmasha. The purification takes place in the sheath made of breath, the first sheath of the sadhaka's subtle material body (*sukshmasharira*). Whatever ego-centered greed that is inherent to consciousness when it resides in the gross material sheath (represented by Naraka) is eradicated in favor of the purified ego resident in the sheath of breath. On the northern side of the sanctum (at Panel 6), this purification of the ego is portrayed as Rama (the acharya) disciplining Ocean (the disciple's ego in the sheath of breath). Here on the southern side it is represented by the touch of Krishna's hand (the acharya) on the head of Naraka's son (the royal ego in the sheath of breath). Before Krishna touches her grandson, however, Earth venerates him as "the Person who is the Primordial Seed full of awakened consciousness." This title points to the goal of this sadhana of the southern side: The royal sadhaka—at the end—attains the awakened consciousness embodied by Krishna, a goal represented by his enemy Kamsa.

Third, this panel signifies Krishna's titles Naraka's Slayer (Narakantaka) and Naraka's Foe (Narakari), titles for a terrifying figure. Yet, since Naraka is also a name for Yama's purgatorial realm in the south, toward which this panel faces, the "destruction of Naraka" infuses these titles with reassurance for a prapanna ruler. When Krishna (through the acharya) purifies the sadhaka's ego, he removes Yama's Naraka as his inevitable destination when he dies.

Fourth, this panel represents the establishment of Krishna's samraj by means of his many marriages. First he married his eight primary queens one by one, and now with a single stroke has added over sixteen thousand more, each with her own wealthy household and Krishna as her husband. All of these queens are portions of Goddess Shri, who emerged through the Milk Ocean

churning as Goddess Rama ever inseparable from Vishnu (*BP* 10.59.43; 4.1.4). And each queen represents a realm that now belongs to Krishna.

We learn this from the meanings of his first eight wives as told in the Krishna Story; the eight brides appear in the story in this sequence: 1) Rukmini (*BP* 10.52–54); 2) Satyabhama and 3) Jambavati—their marriages are entwined due to a wondrous jewel derived from Surya the Sun (*BP* 10.56–57); 4) Kalindi; 5) Mitravinda; 6) Satya or Nagnajiti; 7) Bhadra; 8) Lakshmana or Madra (*BP* 10.58). Each of these wives begets ten sons. But when the narrating Shuka discusses their sons, he does so in a sequence that reveals a significant division of rank among their mothers (*BP* 10.61.7–19).

This ranking consists of three sets of wives corresponding to the constituents of Krishna's sovereign rule from Dvaraka. The first set of wives signifies Krishna's majestic status: Rukmini signifies his majesty (*shri*), Satyabhama signifies his realm (*bhumi*), and intertwined with her is Jambavati, who signifies his victory (*vijaya*). The second set signifies Aryavarta or the Realm of Nobles which Krishna takes as his own: Kalindi represents its center, Satya represents its eastern side (and the Solar Dynasty), and Lakshmana represents its western side. The third set signifies the consolidation of Krishna's Satvata clan, for both Mitravinda and Bhadra are Krishna's paternal cousins. This allows for all four of Vasudeva's formations to take birth and marry in a purely Satvata family, for at marriage the wife loses her father's lineage (*gotra*), takes up her husband's lineage, and becomes a bodily member (*sapinda*) of his family (*Manu* 9.22–24).

For example, the Plower as Balarama marries Revati, whereupon she becomes a Satvata. Vasudeva as Krishna marries Rukmini, who likewise becomes a Satvata. The Pre-eminently Mighty as Pradyumna is then born to Krishna and Rukmini, a "pure" Satvata on both sides. He then marries his mother's fraternal niece, Rukmavati, and she becomes a Satvata. The Unobstructed as Aniruddha is then born to Pradyumna and Rukmavati. He marries his mother's fraternal niece, Rochana, and she becomes a Satvata. These, then, are the Satvata heroes of the Vrishnis: Balarama, Krishna, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. When Pradyumna's half-brother Samba is added, there are five heroic Vrishnis. The significant Satvata female is Subhadra, born of Vasudeva and Devaki after Krishna. But she leaves the Satvata lineage through her marriage to Arjuna of the Pandavas (*BP* 10.86.1–12).

Krishna's final act to establish his sovereign rule is to marry the sixteen thousand royal virgins Naraka had kidnapped from royal households all over Bharata. By marrying them he takes possession of these largely anonymous kingdoms. The realm of any king, whether he acknowledges it or not, now belongs to Krishna residing in Dvaraka in the western sea. Ideally, every king rules in the manner of Naraka's purified prapanna son, who openly recognizes the fact that the true sovereign of every realm is Vasudeva Krishna, the master of Satvatas.

Panel 19: Hari as Madhusudana, Slayer of the Asuras Madhu and Kaitabha

THE STORY. This scene depicts an episode in the story of this kalpa's beginning. The Unobstructed first becomes Hayagriva (Horsehead) to retrieve Veda stolen by the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha, and then becomes Madhusudana to slay the thieves. His slaughter of darkness (*tamas*) in the form of Madhu and of passion (*rajas*) in the form of Kaitabha explains his name Madhusudana as "destroyer of darkened or deluded passion." He does this on behalf of Brahma, who embodies passion dominated by purity (*sattva*) and afterward will create spacetime in an orderly manner. The *Bhagavata Purana* alludes to the stories of Hayagriva and frequently uses the title Madhusudana for Krishna, but does not tell the story illustrated here in full. It is found, however, in three other scriptures important to Bhagavata Dharma.

One is Vaishampayana's telling to Parikshit's son, Janamejaya, in the Pancharatra "Narayaniya" teaching contained in the *Mahabharata* (*Mbh* 12.335–352; Ganguli 1982, 1990 10:114–214). He tells it as part of the story of the Unobstructed's Hayagriva form, but does not continue with the story of Goddess Chandika Durga. Another is Markandeya's brief account of Madhusudana, but without Hayagriva, as an introduction to the famous story of yoganidra (sleep of unified consciousness) as Goddess Mahamaya or Chandika Durga in the *Markandeya Purana* (79–93; Pargiter 1969: 461–523). Markandeya tells this famous *Devi Mahatmyam* or "Glorification of the Goddess" during his descriptions of the Manu Terms of this kalpa to a young learned Brahmin named Kraushtuki. The Goddess story explains how, during the second Manu Term ruled by Svarochisha, king Suratha becomes reborn in this Manu Term as the younger son of Surya the Sun. His elder brother, Shraddhadeva, now rules as the seventh Manu Term with the patronymic Vaivasvata; Suratha will rule as the eighth Manu with the matronymic Savarni.

The third telling is in the Pancharatra text called the *Jayakhya-samhita* and is by Narada. His depiction in this panel telling the story it illustrates points to the *Jayakhya-samhita* as its subject. We shall therefore turn to that scripture now and return to the other two later.

THE STORY OF MADHUSUDANA IN THE *JAYAKHYA-SAMHITA*. The *Jayakhya-samhita*, together with the *Satvata-samhita* and the *Paushkara-samhita*, constitute the most authoritative Pancharatra samhitas, called the ratnatraya or "three gems."[4] In the *Jayakhya-samhita* the Bhagavan teaches lessons to Narada, and Narada teaches them to the seer Shandilya at the Badari ashram on the mountain Gandhamadana (*JS* 1; Smith 1975: 114–115) (Figure 10.9). This explains the appearance in this panel of Narada sitting with his vina; he is reciting this episode of Madhusudana to Shandilya at the Badarai ashram. But



FIGURE 10.9. Panel 19: Hari as Madhusudana, slayer of the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

this also implies another location at a later date. During the Krita Yuga, Shandilya teaches the lessons he learned from Narada to Aurva and other sages on Gandhamadana, but he does this after he touches their heads with the vishnuhasta to make them his disciples (*JS* 1). Later on Aurva teaches them to his son Samvarta at Prabhasa on Bharata's western coast. The *Jayakhya-samhita* records Aurva's teachings and thereby implies Prabhasa as its setting.

Prabhasa identifies the *Jayakhya-samhita* and its story of Madhusudana with the Unobstructed formation facing south, for it is the location of tamas and death at the end of the Dvapara Yuga. Krishna's Yadu clan destroys itself at Prabhasa by means of his son Samba; at Prabhasa Balarama leaves the earth in yoga; at Prabhasa Krishna leaves Arjuna to protect Vasudeva and Devaki in Indrapratha and abandons his human life; and at Prabhasa the Kali Yuga begins (*BP* 11.30.1–24; 48). The *Jayakhya-samhita* largely concerns itself with the topics of mantra and kriya or ceremony; they provide two paths (*marga*) leading to different places. One path leads to worldly enjoyment (*bhoga* or *bhukti*) and stops there. The other path leads to emancipation from death and birth (*moksha* or *mukti*), but along the way may also provide worldly enjoyment. The path ending in wordly enjoyment places it in the category of prayoga, "sacrifice or worship undertaken for specific mundane gains; sometimes called 'viniyoga,' " in the words of H. Daniel Smith (1980: 66). The mantras and the devas to which they refer emerge from the Unobstructed and possess a minute portion of Vasudeva's six glorious excellences. "Therefore," as Sanjukta Gupta explains, "they have the power to bestow on their sadhakas the spiritual excellence that may give them miraculous power, wisdom, and other religious objectives" (1992: 186). Both of these paths, however, differ from those motivated by the bhakti desire to serve the Bhagavan as an end in itself, and Narada teaches both types as Bhagavata Dharma. Let us now review the contents of the *Jayakhya-samhita*.

According to Aurva's telling, when Hari appears to Narada, Narada praises him as Supreme Ruler and Supreme Cause with a thousand heads and feet and the brilliance of a thousand suns and moons. His shape is pacified purity and the abode of everything. He is the Golden Embryo who supports all embodied beings and the Supreme Atman. Yet he reclines in the transcendent space within the cave of the heart's lotus; for those who know bhakti-yoga he truly is fearlessness and freedom from bondage (*JS* 2.5–10a). Narada goes on to recount to Hari his various shapes. He is Fish, Tortoise, Man-lion, and Dwarf as Thrice-strider. He is the three Ramas (Rama of the Axe, Rama son of Dasharatha, and Balarama). He is Krishna as a child and Krishna as Damodara Hari.[5] He is Kapila of Samkhya and Yoga. He is the three formations: Samkarshana for those who know, Kama armed with flowers for those who desire, and Aniruddha for the rule of everything "by your conquest." He is Brahma to emanate the whole moving universe, Rudra to destroy it, and Agni, the shape of sacrifice with a fiery mouth, to carry oblations to devas and pitris (*JS* 2.11–18).

After this praise, Narada asks the Bhagavan to please tell him how everything comes into being.

According to Sanjukta Gupta, Pancharatra theology divides Vasudeva's transformation of his self through his Shakti into creation divided between the pure and the impure (1992: 179–183). Pure creation consists of his embodiment through Shakti as transcendental, as subtle, and as gross. Impure creation consists of him as the world made of matter (*prakriti*) and as the deluded souls (*jiva*) inhabiting it. The *Jayakhya-samhita* focuses on pure creation in order to explain the mantras, and the devas they designate, which Vasudeva graciously has revealed for the sake of jivas living deluded lives within samsara's material whirl.

Hari teaches Narada about pure creation by using the concept of shape (*rupa*). He begins with the end of the process. This final stage is his gross shape with parts (*sakala*). This manifest pure shape corresponds to Brahma in the lotus attached to the Unobstructed's navel. Brahma emits the impure creation of spacetime and the jivas dwelling in it. Impure creation in this Vishnu-house is represented by the top sanctum, where the icon of Krishna once stood. If we think of each shape (*rupa*) as a body (*sharira*), panels on the outside of this sanctum would form its "skin." But there are no such panels on the top-floor sanctum; they appear instead as the panels on the vimana and porch enclosing the sanctum below. Hari next describes his unmanifest shape without parts (*nishkala*). This subtle shape corresponds to the three formations rearranged as a male sleeping inside this sanctum on a snake before Brahma appears. This panel is one of those on its outside that constitute its "skin." Hari concludes with his own shape. This shape contains the other two and corresponds to Vasudeva sitting inside the sanctum below. The sculptures of the three formations outside constitute its "skin" (*JS* 2.28 and heading). Let us now consider each of these shapes in the order Hari describes them to Narada.

Vasudeva's shape made of parts is the Unobstructed reclining in the waters. This formation is Vasudeva's fully differentiated state called viratpurusha and contains all phenomena that will come into being with spacetime, including avatars, mantras, and the devas to which mantras refer (Gupta 1992: 186). All of these appear within spacetime through Brahma, for spacetime is Brahma transformed. Brahma's appearance with four faces begins in darkness just before his day (*JS* 2.30–75). By means of the splendor of his unified omniscience, the Unobstructed's ability to increase his size as he wills sends out the water lily of his heart. Its root is his navel and its shape is of requisite breadth and of extraordinary splendor. The unobstructed Hari then emits Brahma, who is made of mental activity (*manas*), into the center of the blossom and gives him four faces.

Brahma's eternal body is the knowledge from which the moving universe emerges and is replete with all sacraments (*samskara*), with the Veda and its limbs, and with the vibhuti powers beginning with animan, the ability to

become minute.[6] But Brahma's passion (*rajas* or *raga*) is excessive because he thinks he is the only cause, self-born as it were, in the lotus. Whatever Brahma produces, therefore, is chaotic; he makes worlds and then has to unmake them. An arrogance of self-sufficiency is his problem, and it is due to a lack of knowledge about his true origin in Hari, even though he is attached to Hari's great shape through the lotus.

To educate Brahma, Hari creates earth (*bhumi*) in the midst of the water inside the lotus. With the pleasure of battle in mind, he then lies down on it in yoganidra, the sleep of unified consciousness. Two drops of his sweat descend into the lotus stalk and become desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*) in the shape of two asura brothers. Desire is the elder and his name is Madhu (Sweet Intoxicating Drink). Anger is the younger (for anger is born when desire is frustrated), and his name is Kaitabha (Of Desire's Likeness). Their natures are desire and anger dominated by darkness (*tamas*). "Whose lotus is this?" they wonder. To find out, they move up the stalk to the bottom of the blossom, which is the Patala realm. From there they move up to the blossom's interior and stand in amazement when they see Brahma. "What's with this one born of a lotus?" they wonder (*JS* 2.37–51).

When Madhu and Kaitabha see Earth (*prithvi*) in the middle of the water they approach her, intent on pulling her out. But they then perceive the evolution of all things (*vibhava sarva*) and conclude that all causation of the world belongs to them who are unconquered; they decide that they are what holds all the worlds together. They grab Veda away from Brahma. And from that moment everything moving and unmoving is threatened by deep darkness, because Veda is Brahma's eyes for creating. Madhu and Kaitabha take Veda down to Patala, leaving the unfinished moving worlds above in a state of severe disorder (*adharma*) (*JS* 2.52–56). Brahma seeks the advice of devas and sages who also belong to the Unobstructed's body and learns that this disaster has occurred because he thinks he is the uncaused Primordial God (*adideva*) of samsara. But the Supreme Cause caused him, they tell him, and he is Vishnu. They advise Brahma to pray to Vishnu, and he does.

Vishnu's response to Brahma's prayer is to divide his shape of knowledge (*vidya*) and delusion (*maya*) into two. The first shape is "my own shape made of knowledge" (*JS* 2.64). In this shape, which includes *brahman* as sound (*shabdabrahma*), he descends to Patala. By uttering *Om* he gets hold of the Veda and returns it to Brahma. This shape corresponds to Hayagriva of the "Narayaniya" account (Ganguli 10: 180, also 136, 148–149, and 163).

The second shape is "my own great shakti fashioned into a shape made of mantra" (*JS* 2.70). Vishnu tells Narada that in this shape he slayed Madhu and Kaitabha: "I grabbed their necks with my two hands in play, smashed their thighs, and dispatched those asuras wearing necklaces of gold. [Goddess Earth] became an abundantly full stream of wealth because of their fat (*medas*), and from then on she has been known as Medini, "earth having the fat of fertility"

(*JS* 2.71–73). Madhusudana exemplifies mantras as portions (*amsha*) of Vasudeva fashioned from the brilliant constituents of Shakti as sound (*JS* 6.220–221a; 6.59–60a; and Bhattacharyya 1967 in *JS*: 22–26). The *Jayakhya-samhita* prescribes the ceremonies by which these sonic portions of God may be employed to attain specific goals.

Hari now tells Narada about the process of differentiation that ends with the Unobstructed formation. It begins with Pradhana, the material Originator who is mahat or Great. Shakti produces her from her self as without beginning, unborn, and unmanifest.[7] Hidden within the Great are three material threads (*guna*), and Shakti will cause her to set them in motion to produce herself as matter transformed (*prakriti*). The Great Originator first produces the thread of sattva, sattva then produces the thread of rajas, and rajas produces the thread of tamas.

This sequence of "threads" corresponds to Vasudeva's three formations. Vasudeva produces the Plower dominated by sattva to be his self embodied as splendor (*prakasha-atma*). The Plower produces the Pre-eminently Mighty dominated by rajas to be his self embodied as transformation (*vikritya-atma*). And the Pre-eminently Mighty produces the Unobstructed dominated by tamas to be his self embodied as material elements (*bhuta-atma*) (following Bhattacaryya 1967 in *JS*: 19–20). Brahma's lotus is rooted in the navel of this viratpurusha, whose body is all the differentiated forms that will ever come to be.

Hari now tells Narada about the source of differentiation. It is the supreme Vasudeva's nonmaterial shape made of consciousness (*chidrupam*). Vasudeva as pacified awareness is the supreme *brahman* of supreme joy in the shape of splendor.[8] Sanjukta Gupta identifies this as a contraction of Vasudeva's "ever-manifest" (*nityodita*) state with six glorious excellences in full display into a "tranquil" (*satodita*) state, a state of total stillness and omnipotence. This supreme Vasudeva "agitates" his shape of splendor to transform it into two modes corresponding to the Plower and the Pre-eminently Mighty. The Pre-eminently Mighty infuses the latter mode with consciousness to produce the Unobstructed:

> [Vasudeva] agitates his flaming splendor and uses the tejas of this cloud of light to pour out the brilliant shape of the Bhagavan as Unfallen (*achyuta*). The Unfallen's unfelled tejas spreads out his shape and Vasudeva [now] abides as a billowing cloud of dharma.
>
> [The Unfallen] agitates his self and the brilliant figure of True Being (*satya*) arises [in this billowing cloud of dharma] like a bubble on the ocean.
>
> [True Being] uses his brilliance made of consciousness to produce the Infinite (*ananta*) named Person (*purusha*) and the Great

> (*mahat*) in brilliant diffusion. He indeed is the abode of all devas, the Supreme Ruler (*parama-ishvara*), who sustains them from the inside (*antaryami*) and [sustains them from the outside] in the garment of their [avatar] rescuers. . . .
>
> Person (*puman*), True Being (*satya*), and the Unfallen (*achyuta*)—these threefold shapes of consciousness (*cidrupa tritaya*) abide within Vasudeva's own shape of pacified awareness. (*JS* 4.4–8,13, in my translation)

Vasudeva's agitation of his pacified awareness corresponds to his self as vyuha Vasudeva, and as Sanjukta Gupta emphasizes, these two are the same; when the sadhaka knows the vyuha Vasudeva he automatically knows the para Vasudeva.[9]

The important teachings in the *Jayakhya-samhita* concerning the use of mantras to attain emancipation and worldly enjoyment are summarized in Appendix 4.

THIS TEACHING IN THE *BHAGAVAD-GITA*. A condensed summary of these doctrines about Vasudeva's creation appears in chapters thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Krishna, who is Vasudeva on earth, teaches Arjuna the "supreme knowledge of omniscience" in chapter fourteen. But he prepares Arjuna for it in chapter thirteen by teaching him about the Unobstructed. He begins, as Hari does in the *Jayakhya-samhita*, with the end of creative emanation and moves backward, but in his case the end is the impure creation of spacetime and the jivas embodied in it. Succinctly stated, Krishna's ultimate goal is to have Arjuna join him in his supreme home and be like him, but he first has to be free of samsara.

Krishna starts off with an agricultural metaphor to explain that each material body is a field (*kshetra*), and that each field contains a conscious knower of the field. He then identifies his self as the field-knower in every body (*BG* 13.1–2). He explains the nature of the field and how to live to be free of it, and then moves on to "what should be known" (*jneyam*), a knowledge that confers amrita (*BG* 13.12).

What should be known is the "beginningless Supreme *brahman*," which Krishna has already identified as "my highest home" (*BG* 13.12; 8.21). But the aspect of the Supreme *brahman* that should be known is not para Vasudeva, but the Unobstructed viratpurusha, the Person reclining on the Snake in the waters of matter. This should be known because the Unobstructed is established in the hearts of all and can be perceived (*BG* 13.13–17). Perception of him leads through the Pre-eminently Mighty to the Plower, and from there to the vyuha Vasudeva who is para Vasudeva.[10] As Krishna states, "My bhakta" who knows the field, knows the field-knower, and knows what should be known, "becomes fit for my mode of being" (*BG* 13.18).

Krishna teaches Arjuna about the Unobstructed. He is the Great Ruler of matter (*prakriti*) and of the person (*purusha*) embodied by it who experiences pleasure and pain. This Great Ruler abides in the embodied person (*deha*) and some call this Supreme Person the Supreme atman (*BG* 13.22). Through visualization (*dhyana*) by their self, some see the Unobstructed as the Supreme atman in the atman. Others see it by the discipline of analysis (*samkhyena-yogena*) and others by the discipline of ritual action (*karma-yogena*). But those who do not know those methods may hear of it from from others, and those who worship with complete dedication to what they hear also go beyond death (*BG* 13.24–26). This, of course, refers to refugees (*prapanna*) following the path of refuge out of trust in Krishna's words. These devotees, Krishna says, are "my supreme bhaktas and I love them exceedingly." Arjuna already knows this distinction between refugees and those who rely on dhyana, samkhya-yoga, or rites, because Krishna has taught it to him (*BG* 12.1–12). Krishna tells Arjuna that whoever sees this Supreme Ruler sees truly and walks the supreme path leading to *brahman* and beyond.[11]

Krishna has now prepared Arjuna for the supreme knowledge of omniscience in chapter fourteen. This is knowledge of Vasudeva and his pure creation. Those who depend on it, he says, "attain a rank equivalent to my own" (*BG* 14.2). Arjuna has already learned that Vasudeva is Supreme *brahman*, but he now learns that matter (*prakriti*), as a transformation of Shakti's Originator (*pradhana*), is Great *brahman* (*mahad brahma*).

Brahman has two dimensions, and Krishna uses a sexual metaphor to explain their relationship. "My womb is Great *brahman*" he says, "and I plant the seed (*bija*) in it." As father he plants his seed and as mother she embodies it as her embryo (*garbha*). From this embryo arises the origin of all beings (*BG* 14.3). The embryo is the Unobstructed reclining on the Snake in the waters, and Brahma rooted to its navel is the origin of all beings. The production of all beings thereafter is merely a replication of this first conception of pure creation, because, Krishna says, "*brahman* the Great is the womb of all the wombs in which material forms come into being and I am the father who provides the seed" (*BG* 14.3). This explains how Vasudeva is present in the atman of all embodied beings, as Arjuna learned in the previous chapter. Just as a pregnant woman contains a fetus, each embodied being (*dehin*) contains a seed (*bija*) of Vasudeva in the heart of consciousness. This seed is the Unobstructed reclining on the Snake.

Those who know that the Unobstructed as this bija seed is beyond the threads of matter, and also serve Krishna with the discipline of devotion (*bhaktiyogena*), pass beyond matter's threads and are fit to become *brahman*. The undying and unchanging para Vasudeva is the base supporting the *brahman* they are fit to become (*BG* 14.26–27). This means they are fit to become *brahman* as Great on their way to join *brahman* as Supreme, who is para Vasudeva.

Krishna describes this journey to Arjuna in chapter fifteen, using the metaphor of a tree, a woodcutter, and a bird. The universe of spacetime rooted like a lotus in the Unobstructed's navel resembles a great asvattha fig tree. Its fatly nourished roots dangle down from their originating root high up in the branches of the host tree, where a bird once dropped an asvattha seed. The fig tree took over the host and grew into a sprawling world where birds nest and eat its figs. None dwelling inside the tree can see the whole of it, nor its beginning or its end, nor what it is that sustains it. But when a woodcutter fells it, the birds fly away in freedom from their limited world. Krishna tells Arjuna to be both woodcutter and bird: "Use the powerful axe of nonclinging to cut down this firmly rooted asvattha, and with 'I take refuge in that Primordial Person from whom ancient creativity flowed forth,' search for that high realm from which those who reach it do not return . . . for that is my highest home" (*BG* 15.1–4, 6).

Narada's telling of the story of Madhusudana in the *Jayakhya-samhita* accounts for this sculpted panel and implies the mantras and liturgies of this important Pancharatra text. The telling of the same story in the "Narayaniya" of the *Mahabharata* appears on this Vishnu-house through Hayagriva, the panel facing north at the northwest corner of the porch below (Panel NP1; *BP* 5.18.1; 7.9.33–39). The telling in the *Devi Mahatmyam* of the *Markandeya Purana* may also be illustrated on this Vishnu-house, but I have not seen it.

THE PANEL. Madhusudana's long body at the center of this panel divides it horizontally into three portions. In the center, viewed as if from above, he stretches out on the Snake as bed, turned toward the viewer, his head to the east and feet to the west (Figure 10.10). He rests his body within the Snake's coils, points his right foot upward, his left foot westward, and pillows his tall crown in the Snake's five hoods, which shield it slightly. He has one pair of arms. He bends his right forearm up at the elbow and with his right hand forms what appears to be a fist (the mushtimudra or balimudra) facing the viewer. He stretches his left arm straight eastward with his left hand to the side of the Snake's hoods.

Viewers who follow the southern sequence approach this panel coming from the west, as do the two asuras depicted at his feet in the upper portion. Madhusudana looks at the approaching viewers in the same way as he looks at the approaching asuras, perhaps an intended detail. The asura brothers above Madhusudana and the figures below him are viewed from the side. Madhu (desire) and Kaitabha (anger) stand behind the Snake bed at Madhusudana's feet. They face southward, but look eastward toward the reclining Person. Madhu's right arm stretches out to point his left index finger mockingly at his face, while his right hand holds a mace extending diagonally over his right shoulder. Kaitabha stands behind him, his right arm hanging down at his side, while his left hand held at his chest points its index finger in the same manner.



FIGURE 10.10. Madhusudana and the upper portion of the panel (detail). Photo by Sathya Seelan.

The center of this upper portion of the panel is badly damaged and its sculptures have crumbled. At the top in the center Brahma sits on a lotus throne, faces southward, and forms an indecipherable mudra with his right hand. Two figures fly at his sides, each raising the left hand as if in astonishment. Below Brahma's right side is a right leg bent at the knee; this is all that remains of what must have been one of two figures, the other below Brahma at his left side. They would have depicted two of the Bhagavan's four weapons as persons, if we follow the guide of similar depictions of this scene at seventh-century Mamallapuram and sixth-century Deogarh in the north (Srinivasan 1964: 155, note 2, and plate XLVIII; Huntington 1985: 209, plate 10.29). The wheel named Sudarshana would be a handsome youth, and the conch named Panchajanya would be a short male with a pot belly.

All three figures in the panel's lower portion are beneath the Snake bed (Figure 10.11). On the east under Madhusudana's outstretched left arms sits the rishi Narada with his vina. The top of his matted hair touches the Snake. His legs cross at the ankles and his raised knees support the vina in his right hand; he plucks with the fingers of his left hand as he sings the story depicted by the panel. The other figures depict two of the Bhagavan's weapons as persons. On the west sits the gada or mace named Kaumodaki (perhaps meaning "wicked pleasure"). She appears as a crowned female with one pair of arms



FIGURE 10.11. The lower portion of the panel (detail). Photo by Sathya Seelan.

quietly kneeling. Her body's upper part faces south toward the viewer while her lower part faces east. Her right knee rests on the ground as her lower leg bends up behind her to the west. Her right arm extends under her breasts to place her right hand near her left elbow. This elbow rests on her eastward-leaning left knee supported by her left foot on the ground, and her left hand appears to hold an object, perhaps the remains of a mace.

The third person, positioned directly under Madhusudana's navel center, is a male with one pair of arms and hair flying out from under his crown, which means he is in motion. He faces the viewer as his right side thrusts westward, propelled from the east by his left side. His straight right arm (broken off near the elbow) and his raised right knee thrust westward, and his right hand holds a broken object, probably the remains of a knife or sword. His lower left leg and foot propel this thrust from the east, and his fluid left arm stretches behind him eastward to maximize the force of his stabbing right hand. He is the knife or sword known as Nandaka (He Makes Happy). We know from the story that Madhusudana uses two hands to kill the asura brothers. Presumably he holds them with his right hand and kills them with the knife or sword held in his left hand, represented by this central male on Madhusudana's left side thrusting westward toward the asuras.

Krishna in the *Bhagavad-gita* supports this identification of the weapon as Nandaka. At the beginning of the Great War, Arjuna is paralyzed by the dilemma of his dharma as a Kshatriya and concludes: "Even if they kill me, Madhusudana, I do not want to kill them, not even for the sake of ruling the three worlds, much less Earth (*Mahi*)" (*BG* 1.35). Krishna responds by teaching

Arjuna many things, including the supreme secret (*rahasya uttama*) he once taught to Vivasvat the Sun, who taught it to Manu, who taught it to Ikshvaku, who passed it on to royal rishis of the Solar Dynasty until it was lost (*BG* 4.1–3). He now reveals it to the Lunar Dynasty through Arjuna. First he teaches his and Arjuna's true identity (as the inseparable rishis Narayana, who remembers, and Nara, who forgets). Then he expounds the proper nonclinging relation of ritual performers to the fruits their rites produce when performed by one devoted to him. After this he explains the meaning of jnana: it is the knowledge "by which one sees all beings without exception in the atman, then in me" (*BG* 4.35). He concludes his teaching of the supreme secret this statement: "Therefore arise, son of Bharata, take up yoga and with the sword of jnana cut this self-doubt born in your heart of ignorance" (*BG* 4.42). This violent act of cutting doubt makes one "happy" and explains why Krishna's knife or sword is known as Nandaka.

Several people viewing this Madhusudana panel with me in December of 2003 said they perceived the depiction of Goddess Chandika Durga's battle with the asura Buffalo in the badly damaged stucco above the central window that follows this panel. This window marks the location of the Unobstructed below and is a logical place for such a depiction. The Madhusudana panel signifies shakti prior to spacetime, the Goddess embodies the tejas produced by shakti after spacetime has been created, and the Vishnu murti panel directly after this window signifies tejas operating on behalf of devas on the shore of the Milk Ocean. The depiction of Durga fighting Buffalo they perceived would document the transition from this Madhusudana panel to that Vishnu panel. But in the press of time I was not able to study the damaged stucco and cannot say that I saw it myself.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The panel represents the murti Madhusudana, and signifies the potency (*shakti*) of the Unobstructed formation. It also represents this potency as embodied by mantras used for the sake of worldly gain (*bhukti*) and emancipation (*mukti*), but here most immediately for bhukti. Rites for bhukti alone are called prayoga, the "hurling or casting of missiles"; the missiles in this case are mantras. Shakti emits tejas or brilliant conquering power to destroy all obstacles to prosperous longevity by keeping amrita out of the hands of asuras and keeping rakshasas at bay. Aniruddha's tejas defeats enemies of Bhagavata rulers, protects their realms, and facilitates the expansion of borders for the prosperity of their subjects.

But this panel also implies the sequel to this story, which Markandeya tells in the *Markandeya Purana* as the *Devi Mahatmyam* or "Glorification of the Goddess." The *Jayakhya* tells us that the Person we know as Madhusudana is Aniruddha's potency (*shakti*) acting to eliminate Brahma's ignorance prior to his creation of the universe and Daytime of Boar. According to the *Devi Mahatmyam*, once Brahma has done this, Aniruddha's brilliant conquering power

(*tejas*) enters into the universe as Goddess Chandika Durga, whose initial task is to slay the asura called Mahisha or Buffalo. The next panel, which flanks the other side of the central window of this southern side, represents this tejas, but as we shall see, it does not use the figure of Goddess Durga to do so. The tejas she embodies appears in the temple only as multiple depictions of her lion.

Furthermore, this panel denotes the third sheath of the royal sadhaka, the sheath made of manas or mind, which Brahma embodies. The Madhusudana story may be understood to be a metaphor for the purifying potency of a mantra in the mind of a royal sadhaka who performs rites for the sake of worldly enjoyment or bhukti, but does not truly know who he is when he does. Like Brahma, he knows the means, but the results of his rites are faulty. And like Brahma, desire and anger appear to threaten everything including him. "A person who visualizes objects of the senses develops a clinging to them," Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, "and from this clinging desire arises, and from desire anger is born." Anger then leads to delusion, to loss of memory, to the ruin of intelligence, and to destruction (*BG* 2.62–63).

According to this interpretation, shakti in the shape of mantra enters into the sadhaka's mind, just as the Person on the Snake enters Brahma's lotus, perhaps whispered into his ear by his acharya. The shakti of this mantra then purifies the sadhaka's mind of desire and anger, just as the Person on the Snake frees Brahma of Madhu and Kaitabha. Impelled now by a passion free of desire and anger, the sadhaka, like Brahma, creates through the rites of Veda and enjoys what is created. Yet the sadhaka and Brahma both know that Vishnu, the uncaused Supreme Cause and Primordial God of samsara, is the source and purpose of it all.

Panel 20: Vishnu Kills Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan on the Shore of the Milk Ocean

The Story. This panel continues the story of the Churning of the Milk Ocean from the Mohini episode depicted below at Panel S6 and discussed in chapter 15. After Vishnu as Mohini distributes the amrita to devas, asuras attack to take it back. War breaks out on the shore of the Milk Ocean (*BP* 8.10–11). Bali, son of Virochana, leads asuras in a magical vehicle named Vaihayasa (Moving in the Air), which the great asura yogin named Maya (Architect) created to move however its rider desired. (The asura Maya will also appear in the stories of the next two panels.) Indra, mounted on the elephant Airavata, leads devas. The war begins with the hurling of abuse, but then turns to individual fights, and the shore is soon filled with bones, heads, and blood.

Bali in his vehicle and Indra on his elephant are evenly matched until Bali resorts to magic (*maya*) and hides himself. He sends a mountain that drops blazing trees and sharp rocks, and he sends pythons, vipers, and scorpions; lions, tigers, and wild boars; and naked rakshasa females with tridents and

rakshasa males crying "Cut, pierce." Bali also rains down flaming cinders through winds and clouds flashing with lightning, and stirs the ocean into giant waves and deep whirlpools. The frightened devas appeal to the Bhagavan as sustainer of the worlds, and Vishnu now appears with eight arms and sitting on Garuda. Bali's magic immediately dissolves, for "remembering Hari is freedom from all dangers." The asura Kalanemi riding a lion throws a trident at Vishnu, who catches it and uses it to kill him and his mount. Vishnu then uses his wheel Sudarshana (Beautiful to See) to decapitate three brothers: first Mali, then Sumali, and then Malyavan.

Indra, who holds his thunderbolt (*vajra*) of a hundred joints and eight sharp edges, is emboldened and derisively boasts that he will chop off Bali's head. But Bali responds with wisdom: "Fame, victory, defeat, and death in battle come according to Time's ripening of karma. Wise people know this and are neither elated nor downcast, but you don't seem to be one of them, for you think yourself the agent of your destiny. Your abuse is meaningless." With this, Bali shoots a volley of arrows to which Indra responds with a blow from his diamond-hard vajra, and, like a mountain with severed wings, Bali falls to the ground in his magical vehicle Vaihayasa.

The battle rages on and Indra wields his vajra victoriously until he attacks Namuchi (He Does Not Release Rain). The vajra cannot pierce even the skin on Namuchi's neck. Indra suddenly senses the unexpected workings of karma, just as Bali had said. Disillusioned by the vajra, Indra resolves never use it again. A voice then reveals to him that Namuchi can be killed only by something neither dry nor moist. Indra performs visualization and perceives foam; so he takes foam from the Milk Ocean and cuts off Namuchi's head. Devas resume their attack, but before they destroy all the asuras Brahma dispatches Narada to stop them. "You relied on the arms of Narayana and obtained amrita," Narada says, "and you have prospered by the grace of Shri. Now stop fighting." Obediently the devas control their anger and return to Heaven. With Narada's permission, asuras carry the badly wounded Bali toward the western mountain. Their acharya Ushanas (Shukra) revives the asuras who still have their limbs and heads, and with his touch brings Bali to consciousness. Bali awakes defeated, but does not grieve, for he sees the nature of the world with clarity.

THE PANEL. This badly damaged panel divides vertically between Vishnu with eight arms seated on Garuda on the west, and three asuras, each with two arms, aligned vertically on the east (Figure 10.12). Vishnu faces directly south, wears a tall crown, and tilts his head slightly to the west as he sits on Garuda's shoulders; his left leg hangs down over Garuda's left shoulder and his right leg bends under on Garuda's right shoulder. Among the arms on his right, the front one stretches up and holds the wheel; a hand below that one holds a sword, which extends back behind the arm above; below that a third hand holds



FIGURE 10.12. Panel 20: Vishnu kills Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan on the shore of the Milk Ocean. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

a mace, which extends diagonally up to the edge of the panel. The fourth arm and hand have disappeared. On his left side the conch is visible above his head, but the arm holding it has disappeared. Below it another arm reaches out, bends up at the elbow, and holds something unrecognizable. Beneath it his front arm bends down at his side and its hand at the level of his waist holds the middle of a bow, whose tip reaches the top of Vishnu's crown and curves down to follow his gracefully bending head and torso. The remains of another hand appear near this elbow.

Garuda's head has a small crown and emerges in front of Vishnu's left thigh facing forward. He holds the bottom of Vishnu's left foot with his left hand, and reaches up on his right to support Vishnu's bent right leg on his shoulder. Garuda's left thigh and knee are raised to the east as he bends the lower leg back under him, the foot pointing downward. The right leg stretches out to the west in a flying movement, bending slightly upward at the knee.

At the bottom, Malyavan holds a large mace in his left hand; his right arm and hand have broken off (Figure 10.13). He wears a crown or turban and



FIGURE 10.13. The asuras Sumali in the middle and Malyavan on the bottom (detail). Photo by Sathya Seelan.



FIGURE 10.14. The asuras Mali on the top and Sumali in the middle (detail) Photo by Sathya Seelan.

stands with legs spread. Sumali emerges from behind Malyavan, his right thigh and leg stretching down Malyavan's right side. His head with a crown or turban leans eastward, and his right hand at the level of his chest holds a club stretching diagonally up across his upper arm. His left arm reaches eastward, bends back at the elbow, and holds something over Malyavan's head. Mali

emerges over Sumali's right shoulder wearing a tall crown (Figure 10.14). His right hand at his shoulder holds a mace stretching diagonally upward. His left arm extends eastward, bends up at the elbow, and, with its back to the viewer, his hand spreads his fingers open as if in alarm.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the murti Vishnu, and it signifies the brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) of the Unobstructed formation, which is the effect of the previous panel's potency (*shakti*). It also concludes the story of the Churning of the Milk Ocean, which begins in the predawn Brahma Hour on the northern side of the sanctum (at Panel 7). The story ends here in the afternoon of the sanctum's southern side with a war between devas and asuras over the prosperous longevity (*amrita*) their churning had produced by means of Ajita's indefatigable power.

Moreover, the panel represents the conquering role of Vishnu's wheel Sudarshana in the sadhana, which leads the royal sadhaka to true sovereignty and the bhukti goal of prosperous longevity. The moment depicted is just after Vishnu has killed Kalanemi with his own trident, and just before he decapitates Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan with the wheel Sudarshana. After his slaughter in this story, Kalanemi was reborn as Kamsa, who Krishna slays in the east-facing corner panel (Panel 23). The name Kalanemi appears to be composed of *kala* meaning "time" and *nemi* meaning "the felly of a wheel" or "a portion." In this context, Kalanemi refers to the portion of time, to the segment of the wheel of time, that is represented by the afternoon leading to sunset. Perhaps *kala* as "black" is also intended, so that the asura Kalanemi represents the darkness that increases as day moves toward night, and as the Dvapara Yuga moves toward the Kali Yuga. In the sadhaka's waking consciousness, that dark portion is represented by Kalanemi's rebirth as Kamsa.

Once Vishnu had slain Kalanemi, he slew Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan, three brothers whose names are variations of *mala*, meaning "garlanded." The Valmiki *Ramayana* (7.5–9) tells us that Malyavan the eldest, Sumali the younger, and Mali the youngest but strongest, are powerful rakshasas, "equals of the Three Sacrificial Fires, . . . rivals of the Three-eyed God [Rudra Shiva], . . . as powerful as the Three Vedas and as formidable as the three humours of the body" (wind, bile, and phlegm) (Shastri 1957–1959 3: 384–401). Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan represent a deep darkness (*tamas*) that is threefold. In other contexts, it is kalmasha.[12]

The three brothers rule to the south in Lanka and are learned in Veda, but harass devas, rishis, nagas, and yakshas. When their rakshasa forces march forth to slay devas, however, Vishnu appears on Garuda, having eight arms holding the conch, wheel, mace, bow, and sword (*Ram* 7.6.65). Vishnu slays only Mali in this telling; Sumali and Malyavan flee to Patala for refuge (*Ram* 7.8.22). Sumali's daughter Kaikasi later begets Ravana and his brothers with the sage Vishravas. Their children, except for Vibhishana the youngest, are

cruel and appear fierce because Kaikasi approached this Brahmin muni at a "dreadful time" (*Ram* 7.9.15, 22–23; 27). This "dreadful time" is late afternoon and sunset on the mandala's southern side, for this is when Diti similarly approached her husband Kashyapa and gave birth to the asuras Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha, as discussed in chapter 8.

In the terms of sadhana, the sadhaka relied on a product of his own consciousness (the ocean) after it had been infused with mantra (the milk), and had been churned by Narayana through recitation (*japa*). It was an insubstantial weapon created from his own consciousness, whose effectiveness, however, derived not from himself but from Narayana's pervading and acting mode as Vishnu. The panel illustrates the point of the story: Remembering Hari through mantra emancipates the purity of consciousness from the overwhelming threats of defiled passion generated by "asuras." Mantras embodying the Bhagavan's shakti are potent with tejas. In the struggle with powers that delude embodied consciousness—the demonic senses represented by the hundreds of rakashasas shouting "Cut, pierce," and by their naked women carrying tridents—mantra recitation in japa allows Vishnu to eradicate them.

As Vishnu removes kalmasha from the hour of the Sudarshana ceremony, he presumably removes kalmasha in the sadhaka sponsoring it. These purifying acts take place in the royal sadhaka's sheath made of discriminating consciousness (*vijnana*). In the previous panel representing manas, Aniruddha's shakti in the mantra shape we know as Madhusudana acts inside the lotus prior to the universe. Here, Aniruddha's tejas, in the shape of Vishnu with eight arms, acts on the shore of the Milk Ocean after this universe has been created. Devas and asuras battling on the shore over amrita represent vijnana's dichotomous consciousness in the royal sadhaka during a kriya ceremony performed for the sake of worldly gain or bhukti. The previous panel refers specifically to the *Jayakhya* and its rites, and this panel appears to refer to the rites of Vishnu's wheel Sudarshana, which the *Ahirbudhnya* contains. Let me suggest how the stories of this panel correlate with these rites.[13]

First, Vishnu appears and Bali's magic instantly dissolves; this clears the field for the battle over the amrita to proceed. Vishnu then slays Kalanemi with his own weapon; this removes kalmasha from the afternoon period of the ritual performance. After this Vishnu uses his wheel Sudarshana to slay Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan, who are Ravana's elder relatives; this eliminates rakshasa impurities from the sadhaka's vijnana consciousness. Now the sadhaka's discriminating consciousness correctly perceives distinctions, which are represented by Indra opposed to Bali. But in the story the removal of the rakshasas emboldens Indra to attack Bali arrogantly with his vajra, and Indra defeats him. Bali does not struggle with his defeat because he knows that what is gained or lost in battle is due to karma ripened by Time, not due to what one does oneself. Indra does not understand this until his vajra cannot kill the

asura Namuchi. Then, through dhyana visualization, a voice guides him to foam as a weapon. Indra takes foam of the Milk Ocean and slays Namuchi with it. His vajra is a useless weapon and he abandons it.

Why foam and not the vajra? According to an ancient creation story discussed at Panel W1 in chapter 11, foam is the origin of nine creations that constitute Bhumi or Earth. This insubstantial substance that is neither dry nor wet is the origin of everything, and it has power over everything derived from it. This is why foam and not diamond-hard vajra can slay the asura Namuchi. In the royal sadhaka, we may assume, this foam of the Milk Ocean represents his mantra-infused vijnana consciousness, which is the basis and source of all distinctions he perceives. This sanctified vijnana leads Indra to know what Bali already knows: that actors in this battle do not write their roles, they are written by another. The difference between Indra and Bali, the oppositions inherent to vijnana consciousness, has finally disappeared in regard to knowledge; but in disposition they remain deva and asura. The sadhana now moves to a deeper purification of consciousness.

Panel 21: Krishna Slays Shishupala at Yudhishthira's Rajasuya

THE STORY. The event depicted in this panel takes place after Krishna, Arjuna, and Bhima have returned to Indraprastha from Magadha, and have reported Jarasandha's death to Yudhishthira (*BP* 10.74). His response summarizes the purified vijnana context of this panel: "Your devotees do not distinguish between 'mine and I,' and 'your and yours,' Unconquered Madhava, for these disfigurements belong to beasts" (*BP* 10.74.5).

Preparations begin for Yudhishthira's rajasuya to be conducted in imitation of Varuna's. On the first day, which is the first day of Chaitra, the first month of the year, he receives consecration (*diksha*) to the rites. On the fifth day, when the soma is extracted, he honors the priests and the assembled representatives of his realm. The question arises of who should be honored first. There is no agreement until Sahadeva, the youngest of the five Pandavas, argues in favor of Krishna: "Honor the Unfallen, the Bhagavan Master of Savatas as the best, for these devas and everything such as place, time, and wealth are his self; everything here is his self and does it all; his self is the fire, the offerings, the mantras, the supreme goal of samkhya and yoga; his self is one without a second and the source of this moving universe; his self is his own refuge, and from his self he emanates, preserves, destroys" (*BP* 10.74.19–21). Not suprisingly, the assembly is persuaded. Yudhishthira then worships the feet of the "Lord of the Senses" (Hrishikesha) by bathing them and pouring the water from his feet over his own head. Others do likewise. (The murti Hrishikesha standing on a lotus, we recall, begins this counterclockwise sequence of the sanctum's southern half; see Panel 13.) After Yudhishthira offers Krishna silk clothes and gold ornaments, he stands with tears in his eyes as

others shower flowers on Krishna, venerate him, and shout "Namo Jaya," "Veneration and Victory."

But Shishupala (Child-protector), who is the king of the Chedis and Krishna's father's sister's son, is enraged. His jealous anger at Krishna had been increasing ever since Krishna thwarted his efforts to marry the Vidarbha princess Rukmini and took her for himself (*BP* 10.52–54). Shishupala had aligned himself with Jarasandha, Shalva, Dantavaktra, Vidhuratha, Poundraka, and Rukmi against Krishna and Balarama; and to strengthen their alliance, Shishupala was to have married Rukmi's sister Rukmini. In the meantime, however, she had fallen in love with Krishna and would marry only him. Overnight, Krishna appeared in the Vidarbha capital, "kidnapped" her, and took her away to Dvaraka, grievously humiliating his future brother-in-law Rukmi.

At Yudhishthira's consecration, Shishupala's angry jealousy now emerges in full force. He rises from his seat, raises his arms to address the assembly, and hurls vicious abuse at Krishna, who ignores his words (*BP* 10.74.30–37). Many close their ears and walk out cursing (*BP* 10.74.38–46). The Pandavas and others arm themselves to attack Shishupala, who, while hurling abuse at them too, takes up his sword and shield. But Krishna restrains them, turns to his cousin in anger, and cuts off his head with his wheel Sudarshana. In the uproar that follows, Shishupala's supporters flee for their lives (*BP* 10.74.44–46). But those who remain see something amazing: A brilliant light emerges from Shishupala's body and enters Vasudeva Krishna. It is Jaya or Victory, the guardian of Vaikuntha, who has now fulfilled the curse of Brahma's four Kumara sons. First he was born as Hiranyakashipu, then as Ravana, and finally as Shishupala, but all the while he focused continuously on the Bhagavan as his enemy, and this passionately angry gaze has led him back to Vaikuntha. The irony of the earlier acclamation of Krishna, "Veneration and Victory," is now revealed: Veneration of Krishna leads to his victory over Shishupala and to Victory's release from birth and death. "Victory" now dwells with a form of pure sattva in the presence of Vasudeva (*BP* 3.15–16).

Yudhishthira distributes ritual gifts and takes the ritual bath. Krishna, the Ruler of the Ruler of Yogins, stays on a few months to help complete the rites, and then Devaki's son returns with his family to his own city.

The Panel. The badly damaged panel depicts Krishna, with four arms and a tall crown, standing on its west side and facing forward to the south (Figure 10.15). It depicts the moment just before Krishna cut off Shishupala's head with his Sudardshana wheel. His right leg bears his weight as he lifts his left leg to step eastward toward Shishupala, who stands at a lower level. He raises up his front right hand as if to strike down at Shishupala's head; the object he holds is surely the wheel with which he will slice off Shishupala's head. He appears to grip the back of Shishupala's head with the front left hand, turning



FIGURE 10.15. Panel 21: Krishna slays Shishupala at Yudhishthira's rajasuya. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

it back to the southwest as if it were a sacrificial goat's head.[14] Krishna's back right arm swings down in an arc at his right side; his back left arm bends up parallel to his head and no doubt holds the conch.

Shishupala's crowned head is pulled toward the southwest while his body faces east. The weight of his body is on his left leg, which stretches straight down to the platform, while his right thigh and knee move eastward in a step that leaves the lower leg and foot hanging vertically in the air. Of his two arms, only the right is visible as it reaches eastward, probably to draw his sword. Below the platform on which Shishupala stands is the head and shoulder of a crowned figure emerging from the bottom of the panel. Most likely this is Jaya or Victory, who will merge with Krishna once he has decapitated Shishupala.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel continues the theme of vijnana from the previous panel. We know this from the pattern established by the northern sequence. The corresponding panel on the north side depicts Narasimha ripping open Hiranyakashipu with his vajra nails (Panel 9). The victim here is Shishupala decapitated by Krishna wielding the Sudarshana wheel.

Interpreted in the terms of the sadhaka, the story tells us that Sudarshana chakra rites have eradicated a lingering and deadly opposition to Krishna as the most excellent of sovereigns. It is an opposition with a public face, directed outward to the sadhaka's social position in the world. Originating from Vaikuntha, the realm of pure consciousness, it first expressed itself as Hiranyakashipu, the asura ruler who demanded autonomous self-sufficiency, unaware that the pervading actor, Vishnu, was hiding inside his own consciousness. But the Man-lion Consecration removed that public arrogance.

The opposition emerged again as Ravana, the ten-headed rakshasa in the southern ocean of waking consciousness, who preyed on Vedic society and, driven by lust, refused to bow to anyone. The "embankment" (*setu*) of self-discipline constructed by the monkeys of the mind under the acharya's stern gaze, represented by Rama, led to his eradication. The devout Vibhishana ruling in Lanka under Rama's authority represents the sadhaka now living in public under the authority of the acharya.

Finally, with the Vibhava-diksha, Balarama, Krishna, and their entire extended family entered the center of the sadhaka's consciousness, into his heart. As Krishna matured and entranced the sadhaka's entire inner life, opposition to his sovereignty over the sadhaka's daily life emerged in his waking consciousness in its most dangerous public form. It was the patrilineal rival's jealous claim for the same woman, a jealousy fueled by shame. Krishna had "kidnapped" Shishupala's promised bride in full daylight at the commencement of his wedding ceremony; Shishupala's public humiliation shamed him into contesting Krishna in the very public arena of Yudhishthira's rajasuya. Likewise, the sadhaka had lost his claim to any realm entirely of his own, and part of him was ashamed and angry and jealous of the one who had taken it away. But the

"Path of the Southern Doctrine" eradicated that rivalry. Even intense jealousy fueled by the shame of being subordinate to him turns out to be intrinsic to Krishna's play within the sadhaka's consciousness, and his play is not over yet.

Plate 22: Krishna Attacks Shalva and Dantavaktra

The Story. Shishupala's friend King Shalva had been with Rukmi and Jarasandha when the Yadus defeated them after Krishna had "kidnapped" Rukmini. Shalva vowed to destroy all the Yadus. He performed tapas for Shiva and in return received boons, notably a vehicle built by Maya and named Saubha (Splendorous). It cannot be destroyed by devas, asuras, people, or gandharvas, can go anywhere desired, and terrorizes Vrishnis. And Maya shrouds it in darkness to make it invisible (*BP* 10.76–77).

While Krishna and Balarama are away from Dvaraka to attend Yudhishthira's rajasuya at Indraprastha, Shalva in this Saubha vehicle attacks their island city with a huge army. Krishna's eldest son, Pradyumna, launches a counterattack, but Shalva's vehicle is more than he can handle. Eventually, a mace hits Pradyumna on the chest and fells him. His charioteer takes him out of battle and brings him to consciousness, to Pradyumna's anger, for his removal makes him appear a coward. But he has only done his duty, the charioteer says, because the laws of battle require master and driver to protect one another. Pradyumna purifies himself with water, reenters the battle, and fights for twenty-seven nights.

During this time in Indraprastha, Krishna slays Shishupala at Yudhishthira's rajasuya, completes his role in the ceremony, and then sees omens of evil. Immediately he sets out for Dvaraka and finds Shalva destroying his people. Leaving Balarama in charge of Dvaraka's protection, Keshava tells his charioteer Daruka to take him near Shalva, the master of Saubha who is adept in magic (*maya*). Krishna begins to decimate Shalva's army. Shalva throws a spear at him, but Krishna cuts it down with his arrows, and then shoots sixteen arrows at Shalva's vehicle. Shalva then hits Krishna's left arm, knocks his bow from his hand, and jeers at him: "O fool, Shishupala was your own father's sister's son and my friend. You killed him in the assembly hall because he was unguarded. If you dare stand before me, I will send you to a realm from which you shall never return." Angered, Krishna strikes Shalva on his neck with his mace, which then returns to him. Shalva vomits blood and disappears.

Suddenly, a weeping man appears and says that Krishna's mother, Devaki, sent him. "Shalva tied up your father," he says, "and took him away like an animal to the butcher." Grieving for his father, Krishna wonders how that could have happened. Shalva then appears holding Vasudeva, and in Krishna's presence, cuts off his father's head with his sword and takes it up in his vehicle to the sky. For a while, Krishna is stunned. Then he realizes it is all Shalva's magic, which he learned from Maya, and then and there resolves to kill him.

At this point, Shuka stopped his narration with a comment to Parikshit (*BP* 10.77.30–32). "That is the way some seers tell the story," he said, "but they do not realize it is contradictory. How could Krishna have sorrowed since he was not ignorant? How can there be infatuation (*moha*) in him who wipes away 'the beginningless grasper that is the opposite of the Self'?" Interestingly, that "beginningless grasper" refers to the snake Kaliya, on whom Krishna dances in the panel directly opposite this one on the north-facing side (Panel 10). Shuka's interruption reveals an editor glossing, while preserving, authoritative lore. Chronological layers to the purana thus appear.

Shuka takes up the story again. Krishna shoots Shalva with his arrows, shatters his armor and bow, cuts off the jewel on his crown, and smashes his vehicle to pieces with his mace, which then falls into the sea. Now standing on the ground, Shalva rushes at the "Immoveable" (Achyuta) with his mace. Krishna uses an arrow (*bhalla*) to cut off Shalva's arms. Then, appearing like the eastern mountain crested by the sun, he takes up his blazing wheel. Just as Indra cut off Vritra's head with the vajra, Krishna uses the Sudarshana chakra to cut off Shalva's head with its earrings and crown.

Dantavaktra (Crooked Tusk), the king of Kalinga, Krishna's mother's brother's son and Shalva's close friend, now approaches Krishna in revenge (*BP* 10.78.1–16). Alone and on foot, with mace in hand, his huge body shakes the earth with each step. Krishna seizes his mace and jumps down from his chariot to confront him. "Though you are my cousin," Dantavaktra says, "I am going to destroy you, for you are an enemy in the guise of a relative." With a great roar, he hits Krishna on the head with his mace. Unmoved, Krishna strikes back with his mace, hitting Dantavaktra on the chest. Dantavaktra vomits blood, falls to the ground, and dies. Then, just as in the death of Shishupala, a subtle light passes from Dantavaktra into Krishna as everyone watches. This light is Vijaya, younger brother to Jaya who had been Shishupala. First Vijaya was Hiranyaksha, then Kumbhakarna, and finally Dantavaktra; and with his death at Krishna's hand the stories of Jaya and Vijaya come to an end.

But there is still Dantavaktra's brother Viduratha (perhaps Harasser of Chariots). Krishna comes at him with sword and shield and beheads him with his wheel Sudarshana. Beings everywhere burst into praise at this act: Krishna has destroyed the Saubha vehicle, Shalva, Dantavaktra, and at last Viduratha. Only those who have the perception of beasts ever think Krishna is defeated, for he is the Master of Yoga and Ruler of the Moving Universe, and is always and everywhere the victor.

The Panel. The panel, badly damaged and repaired, portrays the moment Krishna confronts Shalva after his vehicle, the magical Saubha, falls into the sea in shattered pieces (Figures 10.16, 10.17). The correspondence between text and image in this case is a literal depiction of narrative metonymy, for the panel depicts Shuka's use of Garuda as the emblem of Krishna's chariot



FIGURE 10.16. Panel 22: Krishna attacks Shalva and Dantavaktra. Photo by Sathya Seelan.



FIGURE 10.17. Krishna slays Shalva and Dantavaktra (composite, prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1990.

entering battle. "Everyone on their own side and on the other saw the entrance of Garuda, younger brother to Aruna, charioteer of the Dawn" (*BP* 10.77.11). Krishna flying into battle on Garuda is Krishna riding into battle in his chariot driven by Daruka.

The panel divides in half between Krishna astride Garuda on the west and Shalva and Dantavaktra on the east. Krishna, who is crowned, looks to the south, tilts his head slightly eastward, and sits astride Garuda. His left leg stretches over Garuda's left shoulder and down toward the east, pointing its foot eastward. His right leg is pulled up and rests its foot flat on Garuda's right shoulder, pointing its bent knee eastward. Krishna has two pairs of arms. He presumably holds the wheel in his front right hand, which is in the panel's upper western corner; and he probably holds the conch in his back left hand, which is up near Shalva's head. Below his right knee his back right hand holds a mace, which stretches up his right side to end near his front right elbow. He reaches with his front left arm across his chest to his right side, where he holds an undetermined object, probably the weapon called bhalla. Garuda's head has either a small crown or a small pile of hair and emerges between Krishna's thighs facing south, but tilts westward. Both his arms have broken off. His right leg stretches back to the west in flight, bending up to parallel the panel's edge. His left knee rises up to the east and his left foot points down toward Dantavaktra.

Shalva with a tall crown and two arms stands east of Krishna. The lower portion of his body moves eastward as he stands on his left leg and steps to the east with his right leg, his thigh raised and his foot at the panel's edge. His torso, however, twists south toward the viewer and his head west toward Krishna. His right arm mirrors Krishna's gesture by reaching across his stomach to his left side where he holds a large mace, which stretches up to the middle of his crown. His left arm is not visible. Dantavaktra emerges from the entire bottom of the panel. His crowned head points toward Shalva's feet, and the lower parts of his legs disappear into the panel's lower frame. He holds a bulbous mace with his right hand, and it rises toward Garuda's right thigh; his damaged left arm bends inward at the elbow, but the hand is undetermined.

The position of the two major figures on platforms at different levels depicts the ritual context in which Krishna killed the cousin who hated him. Krishna on the higher level indicates that he has just received veneration as the chief guest. Shishupala sitting at a lower level had stood up to berate him, and had taken up his shield and sword in self-defense. Shishupala's right hand may be in the act of drawing his sword. The arrangement suggests that Krishna grabbed Shishupala's head from behind just as he stepped forward to attack the Pandavas and others.

The Panel's Meanings. The panel represents Aniruddha's tejas completing its purification of the royal sadhaka. This final purification takes place in the

fifth sheath made of joy or bliss (*ananda*), which embodies a unified consciousness basic to the dichotomous vijnana. This final purification is apparently by means of the sadhaka's breath, for Krishna slays Dantavaktra with his mace Kaumodaki, not with his wheel Sudarshana. Gada the mace represents prana's vitality, force, and power pervading the sadhaka's subtle material body (*BP* 12.11.14). Moreover, Dantavaktra's death occurs after twenty-seven nights of battle with Krishna's son Pradyumna; Krishna presumably slays him on the twenty-eighth day, the end of the lunar month.

This death frees the sadhaka from a sin Shuka calls "the grasper that has no beginning and is opposed to the atman." Jaya and Vijaya represent this sin as Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha, as Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and finally as Krishna's kinsman Shishupala and Dantavaktra. Shishupala is Krishna's paternal cousin, a kinship relation significant to public status. Shishupala contests Krishna's status first through a public struggle over a woman, and then through a highly charged public attack on his character. As we observed at the previous panel, this story vividly represents the power of this sin to distort the vijnana consciousness of the royal sadhaka. But Dantavaktra is Krishna's maternal cousin, a kinship relation significant to domestic rather than public status. Dantavaktra attacks Krishna's firstborn son Pradyumna at home in Dvaraka while public attention is focused on Krishna at Yudhisthira's rajasuya.

In the sadhaka, Dantavaktra's insidious betrayal of the intimate relation of a boy to his maternal uncle in the privacy of the family represents this sin in his sheath made of ananda, which is the fundamental and most intimate dimension of any person. Krishna purifies ananda of the sin Dantavaktra represents, and the royal sadhaka is now prepared for the rites conferring true sovereignty. As discussed in chapter 9, Krishna will now slay in the royal sadhaka any perception as king that "This realm is mine" and that "I am its ruler."

Dantavaktra's death ends the story of the gatekeeper Conquest (Vijaya); he was the subtle light that left Dantavaktra and entered Krishna. Conquest had now rejoined his brother Victory (Jaya) in Vaikuntha. First as Hiranyaksha, then as Kumbhakarna, his final birth as Dantavaktra led to the purification of Krishna's maternal lineage and completed the purification of his extended family. Interpreted in terms of the sadhaka, Krishna had eradicated and absorbed rivals of his own clan, who had entered the sadhaka along with him. As we recall, Krishna entered the center of the sadhaka's consciousness (*hridaya*) after his birth at Mathura, when Vasudeva carried him across the raging Yamuna River at night and switched him with the infant form of the Goddess Yoganidra (Sleep of Unified Consciousness), at Yashoda's side. As Krishna grew from infancy to manhood within the sadhaka, so did his clan rivals. Now, however, the sadhaka was completely free of any opposition to Krishna's protective sovereignty. The sadhaka was now prepared for the throne of waking consciousness as represented by Ugrasena, who sat enthroned in Mathura.

Ugrasena on Mathura's Throne. Ugrasena (Having the Formidable as Master?) ruling in Mathura represents the "I" of the Bhagavata sadhaka that rules under the sovereign protection of the formidable Krishna at Dvaraka. Initially, like any ruler before he underwent Bhagavata consecration, Ugrasena in Mathura was vulnerable to self-centered desire born of his own nature. That desire took the form of the asura named Kalanemi, who took birth as Ugrasena's son; and the son, we recall from the discussion of Harischandra and Shunahshepa in chapter 9, is the father reborn. In other words, Ugrasena had been seized by the dark portion of time signified by Kalanemi; it is a portion that falls in the afternoon as the sun moves toward sunset into the darkness of night and the Kali Yuga, and is characterized by possessiveness. As that dark possessiveness, Kamsa rebelled against his father, jailed him, and took the throne for himself. The dark sense that "this is mine" now ruled the ruler of Mathura. He thereafter treated the realm as if it were his own, as if he, the "Indra of People" (Narendra), were to be worshiped by all his subjects.

Yet the next panel (Panel 23), which is around the corner and faces east, depicts Krishna pulling Kamsa off of that throne, after which he will restore Ugrasena to the throne, and thereafter protect him in Mathura while ruling his own realm of Dvaraka. As we noted in chapter 9, when Kamsa died, a light passed from his body into Krishna. Because of his undeviating enmity—which energized his continual focus on Krishna—Kalanemi born as Kamsa disappeared into Krishna, just as Jaya and Vijaya later would. The newly restored Ugrasena represents the sadhaka's proper sense of possession, which is that that everything belongs to Krishna. Now awake in the gross body, Krishna protects that purified awareness from the "doorway" (*dvaraka*) between the eyes. With a clear vision preserved by Krishna himself, the sadhaka is prepared to exercise the true sovereignty, which Yudhishthira in the next panel represents.

To sum up these six south-facing panels, the ritual stages of the "Path of the Southern Doctrine" begin with consecration into the acharya's prayogic protection as refugee (*prapanna*), which the Dwarf and Bali panels on the west represent. The result is final purification and true sovereignty in the morning of ritual action, which the Kamsa and Yudhishthira panels on the east represent. They face eastward toward Indra's realm, as did the emperor Nandivarman when he sat on his throne in eighth-century Kanchipuram. As an "Indra of People" (Narendra), Nandivarman II Pallavamalla ruled as a true emperor (Parameshvara) because he ruled as a "slave of Krishna" (Bhagavata) in a line of sadhakas that descended from the first emperor, Prithu.

PART III

The Public Dimension of the Vishnu-House

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Introduction

Spacetime and Its Display

A brief review of ideas discussed in chapter 2 may at this point be useful. As we noted there, the Bhagavan's body of ever-changing matter is like the human body with both gross and subtle modes, except that the Bhagavan's bodies are endlessly varied. The gross body is manifest to human eyes, while the subtle body is not. In the case of both God and humans, the Self (*atman*) of pure consciousness and eternal being gazes into the world through the sense organs of those subtle and gross bodies. Made of matter, those bodies are always in flux. In the case of humans, that flux causes the Self to misperceive itself, but in the case of God, he is never fooled; even while he plays the game of illusion, part of Narayana watches the game, transcendent to it all. Narayana is both actor and audience in his lila.

Narayana, we recall, is pure consciousness that is innately creative. Out of the sheer joy of play, Narayana becomes Vasudeva, the supreme Father, and Goddess Sri Lakshmi, the supreme Mother. Narayana is now Light blazing with two dimensions "inside" himself: One is the perceiver, the other is the perceived; one is knowledge, the other is matter. The dimension of knowledge (Vasudeva) then allows the dimension of matter (Sri Lakshmi) to envelop its "center"; she produces the "formation" (*vyuha*) of Vasudeva with a dark (*krishna*) body. Nothing yet exists, however, because Narayana has not yet produced a "thing" of name-and-form (*namarupa*).

The dark Vasudeva formation at Narayana's "center" is now the place of action. By means of the enveloping Goddess, the Vasudeva formation rearranges himself in a sequence that produces

"things," culminating in the fantastic yet orderly complexity that is his body and our universe. As each formation appears, Vasudeva's omniscient Light reveals itself as tinted by the Goddess: Purity appears as white, passion appears as red, and defilement appears as dark.

There are three sets of sequences. The first set produces Vasudeva with a face in every direction. That is Vasudeva's Self enveloped by matter. The second set produces a subtle material body for that Self. The third set produces a gross body for that subtle body. The vimana of the Emperor's Vishnu-house replicates all three sets and bodies in the following ways:

1. On the vimana's bottom floor, Vasudeva as omniscient knowledge (*jnana*) embodied in black gazes out through openings in its four sides, the way the embodied Self of the human gazes out through the sense organs of the human body. Although its purity is white, it appears to us as black stone.
2. On the vimana's middle floor, Vasudeva is dominated by the passion that tints his Light red. He reclines in his subtle body and dreams all that ever has and ever will emerge from his sovereignty (*aishvarya*), which include his embodied life as the universe and his avataras descending into it. He reclines on a snake the way the human fetus reclines within the placenta, recollecting all its lives. Although its passion is red, it too appears to us a black stone.
3. On the vimana's top floor, Vasudeva is transformed into his complete descent into spacetime as Krishna; he stands inside his own gross body of spacetime in a gross body of his own. Tinted dark blue (*nila*) in the Dvapara Yuga when he lived, his stone body in the Kali Yuga is black (*krishna*).

The black stone icon that once stood in that top sanctum was believed to embody Vasudeva's potency (*shakti*). Brilliant conquering power (*tejas*) was believed to emit from it to conquer Nandivarman's enemies. That tejas appeared as the golden Goddess Chandika Durga and her angry emanation, the black Goddess Kali. The poet Kalikanri described that standing icon in the ninth stanza of his poem: "Pinnai's forehead is a / Gleaming crescent moon / And she's a cousin, / So long ago in battle / He subdued deceiving Lust / In the shape of seven bulls, / And now owns beautiful Kacci // Where the Sovereign of Pallavas / Serves the Vishnu-house he built / after he conquered those / angry kings with swords / stained black from blood / As the Emperor who owns / The Drum with a bitter mouth / And the Conch with the roar of the sea" (*PT* 2.9.9). Kalikanri has used the seven bulls conquered by Krishna to win Pinnai to represent the final events in Nandivarman's conquest of the Pandya-led alliance that opposed him as Kanchi's ruler. His conch and drum, which were named in the prakara inscription describing his consecration as Kanchipuram's "Indra," appear here in rites of war; conveyed through their sound, tejas

defeated that alliance and brought Nandivarman to a secure throne as Bhagavata emperor.

In this stanza, Kalikanri cryptically recorded the belief that the standing Krishna icon in the top sanctum of the Emperor's Vishnu-house was shakti, the source of the tejas that enabled Nandivarman to prevail. Tejas appears here as Pinnai. Early Tamil Bhagavatas apparently believed that Goddess Chandika Durga, who embodies tejas, had taken a cowherd form to marry the cowherd Krishna. In a seventh-century rock-cut shrine in Mamallapuram, Pinnai stands next to Krishna as he holds up the mountain Govardhana to shield Gokula from Indra's rains, thereby illustrating the murti name Govinda, "Indra of Cows." As Indra's sovereign, the cowherd boy is sovereign over all devas (Hudson 1982). It was because the standing Krishna icon embodied shakti that sculptors depicted it as an icon standing in a battle scene on the prakara; the icon is rigid as stone, yet its explosive power throws the soldiers surrounding it into the air (Figure 4.8). Kalikanri's identification of that icon as the cowherd who had won Pinnai as bride revealed it as the embodiment of shakti: Krishna's male potency (*shakti*) by itself was incomplete; living as the Unobstructed among humans, Govinda was fully himself only when joined to his female conquering power (*tejas*) (Hudson 2001b).

Its potency explains why the standing icon was intentionally difficult to reach. It stood in the inner and hidden part of the vimana on the top floor, and only by climbing a ladder could one get to it. The top sanctum was not meant for general visitation; there is no circumambulatory around it and there are no sculptures on its exterior. Those who conquered Nandivarman's descendents at the end of the ninth century, believing the icon to be the source of Pallava conquering power, may have taken it to their own domain where it has disappeared to historical memory.

The Depiction of Spacetime

The depiction of spacetime logically belongs on the small top sanctum, but it is not there. Rather, the temple's designers placed it on the much larger bottom floor. The depiction appears in two places: on the vimana wall surrounding the bottom sanctum, facing outward toward the enclosing prakara wall; and on the prakara wall itself, facing inward toward the vimana. That arrangement is immediately obvious to visitors entering through the prakara gateway. They see sculpted forms of the Bhagavan directly in front of them on the porch, and they see the beginning of Pallava history on the prakara to their left with its culmination in Nandivarman's rule on the prakara to their right.

That arrangement made a theological point about time and place. The Bhagavan's gaze, it said visually, ruled the Pallava Dynasty at Kanchi from its beginning. Moreover, his most significant instrument of rule was

Nandivarman II Pallavamalla, who built the Vishnu-house as a place where he could bow down to his master. The sculptures along the entire south wall and the southern half of the west wall, which depict events in Nandivarman's reign beginning with his accession about fifty years earlier, illustrated that theology. Through openings in the outer wall of the vimana on the bottom floor—through openings in his gross body, that is—Vasudeva gazes from his hidden realm across the moat in the four directions, and his gaze falls on the entire Pallava Dynasty from its inception. His Unobstructed formation, however, looks southward directly onto Nandivarman's sculpted history. Through an ever-watchful gaze, that arrangement says, Vasudeva caused the Pallavas to do his will, moving them from the outside as External Controller and from the inside as Inner Controller, just as a puppeteer moves his puppets (*BG* 18.61). Most especially, it also says, he directed his protective gaze toward his faithful emperor, Nandivarman II Pallavamalla, who built this Vishnu-house for him.

That arrangement also revealed distinctions within God. When the designers enclosed the three vertical sanctums by means of the vimana wall and porch, and then enclosed that entire "mountain" with the prakara wall, it divided Narayana's hidden dimensions from his public dimensions. The sculpted panels of the prakara and the vimana can be seen by anyone qualified to enter through the gate on the west, but the panels on the sanctums inside the vimana are not visible to any except those who cross the moat, enter, and climb the stairs. Perhaps in Nandivarman's day, entrance to the public realm of the temple was restricted to an elite among whom some were allowed entrance to its hidden realm.

By moving spacetime's depiction from the small top sanctum to the expansive walls of the vimana and porch enclosing the bottom sanctum, the designers had ample room to depict the Bhagavan's gross body in great detail. Now they could comfortably follow Shuka's advice about studying God: "Once the mind knows the Lord's manifest form woven of material threads then it may enter into the *brahman* beyond the threads, who is hidden, self-luminous, and transcendent, the Bhagavan known as Vasudeva" (*BP* 5.16.3). First learn about his gross form, and then about his subtle form; after establishing the mind in the gross, then lead it to the subtle (*BP* 5.26.39).

That movement, from God's gross body to God's subtle body, is exactly the way visitors move through the Vishnu-house. Walking clockwise, visitors turn left at the entrance to walk along the covered pathway paralleling the prakara. Looking to the right and across the moat as they walk around the vimana, they see sculpted panels on the west, north, east, and south walls. What they do not see easily, however, are the sculpted formations on the sides of the bottom sanctum gazing out through vimana windows toward them. Nevertheless, sculpted panels on the vimana depict the respective identities of those formations through subtle numerical symbols.

Each corner panel that faces north (Panels N1 and N6) depicts a single major figure to represent the Plower as the first of Vasudeva's formations. The corner panels that face east (Panels E1 and E6) are composed of double parts to represent the Pre-eminently Mighty as the second formation. The corner panels that face south (Panels S1 and S6) depict scenes composed of triple parts to represent the Unobstructed as the third formation.

Even if those numerical signs are understood, however, visitors find it difficult to recognize and read the mapping of spacetime on the vimana and porch, because the structural elements of the universe are depicted not as natural objects but rather as the bodily forms of characters in narratives. The designers appear to have followed another piece of advice from Shuka, this time about literature: "If a work of art reveals the presence of God, even if it is imperfect, it will not attract crows but hamsas"—geese signifying acute mental discrimination (*BP* 12.12.45–52). Since the universe is a body that refers beyond itself to the Supreme Self as its origin, sustainer, and destroyer, the vimana depicts the natural world as it would be seen by people of unusual discrimination. Its audience is sophisticated Bhagavatas. Consequently, visitors today will not recognize what they see as a consistent and complex mapping of the Bhagavan's gross body of spacetime unless they already know the Bhagavata Dharma well.

It makes sense that the designers of a "private chapel" for a Bhagavata emperor had in mind worshipers who would be sophisticates learned in Bhagavata lore. They designed the sculpted panels not to educate the ignorant but to aid the visualizations of the learned. The sculpted panels must have functioned for their worship the way Tamil and Sanskrit poems do: they point beyond the immediate image to numerous other images and stories, each echoing other stories and other meanings, all finally referring to the Speaker whose utterance is cosmos and history. As Kalikanri said in the first stanza of his poem about the temple, they refer to "the Speaker" who is "the substance of the words He speaks." Through stone, plaster, and paint, the vimana illustrated what worshipers longed to see directly through visualization: that all of space and all of time refer in the end to Vasudeva Krishna.

According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, the Bhagavan in his Unobstructed formation taught his firstborn son, Brahma, how to organize his body and the lotus into the universe, and Brahma passed that information on to others. It was transmitted through scriptures, notably through the *Bhagavata Purana*, whose portions are portrayed more than once on the vimana itself. Following that teaching, the designers mapped the cosmos by means of thirty panels in a sequence that begins immediately north of the porch's western doorway and proceeds clockwise (see Figure 11.2 below for an identification of those panels). Before turning to those panels in the next chapter, let us first examine spacetime's organization. It differs radically, of course, from conventional modern notions.

The Organization of Spacetime

Brahma turned his lotus and body into the "Brahma sphere" (*brahmanda*) and it became the inverse of our bodies. Whereas the human's gross body envelops a subtle body that in turn envelops the Self, Brahma's gross body exists at his center. His subtle body surrounds that gross body, and in turn his Self surrounds his subtle body. For us, the Light that provides our consciousness exists as the Self in our center, in our "heart"; our darkly ignorant wakeful ego exists in the material bodies surrounding it. In the case of Brahma, however, his Light exists on his periphery, and his darkly ignorant wakeful ego exists at his material center. In cosmography, it resides on the top of Mount Meru.

Moreover, whether Brahma is awake or asleep, his body exists "inside" Vasudeva and never leaves. Brahma is not born *out* of the womb in the way we are, but *in* it. Brahma as spacetime may therefore be imagined as a fetus waking and sleeping within the chorion and placenta, which exist inside the uterus behind the mother's navel. In the iconography of the middle-floor sanctum, the chorion and placenta containing Brahma are represented as the dark waters in which the Unobstructed sleeps on the Plower as snake, immersed in Pre-eminently Mighty's impassioned consciousness. The uterus holding all of that belongs to Goddess Sri Lakshmi, the Mother. She is Vasudeva's womb, the "great *brahman*" (*mahad brahma*) into which he plants the embryo to bring forth all things (*BG* 14.3–4). When, as in the bottom sanctum, the Father is visualized as a single body of light, the Mother is there as the lotus womb behind his navel.

The *Bhagavata Purana* describes the dimensions of space and the rhythms of time within the womb of "great *brahman*" in considerable detail (*BP* 5.16–26; 2.5–6). The following is a summary.

Brahma within the Pure Waters

A vertical axis pierces directional space at its center to link fourteen worlds, from Satyaloka at the top to Patala at the bottom. Midway along that axis the earth (*bhu* or *bhumi*) spreads out horizontally, from the center toward a circular boundary. The fourteen worlds (*loka*) arrange themselves vertically in sets of seven, one set above earth and one set beneath it. Earth herself is the dense and "energetic" (*rajasika*) mode of Vasudeva's "power of becoming" (*bhutishakti*). She is worshiped as Goddess Earth (*Bhudevi* or *Bhumidevi*), who designates all the matter of spacetime. Her most gross or dense mode is the element called earth (*prithvi*). The worlds above the earth are composed of her matter in its "pure" (*sattvika*) modes; and the worlds below earth are composed of her matter in its "deluded" (*tamasika*) modes.

Lying in the middle of space (*akasha*), earth divides horizontally into seven concentric circles of land separated by a liquid. At an earlier period of the kalpa, she had spread out as a single whole, but Brahma's grandson, King Priyavarta, circumambulated the center of space in a chariot seven times and left the earth with seven ruts. They then filled with liquids and formed concentric continents around concentric oceans. The continents (*dvipa*), which have liquids on both sides, are inhabited by embodied souls (*jiva*). They extend from densely material Jambu at earth's dark center to its shining edge; that edge is made of "space" (*akasha*), the finest mode of matter. In size, each continent is twice the size of the one it encompasses (*BP* 5.1.30–35). Each of the seven worlds above the earth matches a world below the earth, and the earth in turn matches each of those with a continent.

Pushkara links earth to the highest upper world, Satyaloka, and to the lowest world, Patala (*BP* 3.9.18). The Manasottara mountain range runs along its center, and at each cardinal direction stands a city belonging to the guardian of that direction (*lokapala*). Indra possesses the city Devadhani in the east, Yama possesses the city Samyamani in the south, Varuna possesses the city Nimlochani in the west, and Soma (the Moon) possesses the city Vibhavari in the north (*BP* 5.21.7). Four elephants standing on the Lokaloka mountain range, which lies beyond Pushkara and encloses it, define those directions.[1] Those elephants align with eight cities on eight mountains at Earth's center, which surround Brahma on Mount Meru. Four of those eight cities belong to the world-protectors already noted at the cardinal directions, and four belong to the lokapalas at the intermediate directions (*BP* 5.16.29). Those eight protectors are the material forms of the eight directions (*dinmurti*): Indra is east, Agni is southeast, Yama is south, Nirrti is southwest, Varuna is west, Vayu is northwest, Kubera is north, and Ishana is northeast (Smith 1980: 41).

Horizontally, the earth, from Meru at its center to Pushkara at its outer edge, forms a symmetrical mandala of squares and circles. Enclosed by Lokaloka and its pure waters, it is like a lotus blossom rising above the waters in a pond, fully open to the light of the sun. But like a fetus in the placenta, those same waters envelop it as it lies awake, moving within the womb of the Mother. Both metaphors make a crucial point: Spacetime, as the ever-moving universe (*jagat*) woven of matter, propelled by passion, and governed by time, is constantly in motion. But its components move at differing speeds. The "sphere of Brahma" (*brahmanda*) is like a seven-layered ball of luminescent matter constantly in motion. Each layer envelops the center with increasing darkness until the core of materialized light is so dense it appears to be inert earth (*prithvi*).

In this cosmography, humans in the Kali Yuga normally have direct physical access only to a small portion of the earth: to one-ninth of the central continent Jambu, south of mount Meru, and to the sea of salt that borders it.

They have no direct access to the other inhabited continents, nor to the worlds above or below. There are, of course, exceptions.

In sum, our universe may be thought of as a fetus-like sphere, an open lotus, floating in an inconceivably huge pond of pure water contained in a placenta-like envelope at the center of God. Although that sphere is the entire body (subtle and gross) of Brahma when he is awake, for the Bhagavan it is only his gross body (e.g., *BP* 2.1.26–39 and 2.5.36–42).

The senses and thoughts of humans are confined to its limits. The sense organs that allow for touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, and seeing function only in the immediate area of the earth; even the extremely fine sense organ of the mind cannot penetrate beyond the mountain range on the earth's outermost continent called "Beyond the Mind" (Manasottara). Nor can it pierce through the upper "Realm of True Being" (Satyaloka), nor through the lower realm of the "Fallen" (Patala). Our only source of accurate knowledge about reality beyond the reach of the senses is Brahma's teaching, which he passed down through the seers and sages.

The six material layers (*kosha*) surrounding the seventh layer, the central continent of Jambu, make Jambu the densest portion of spacetime, while the outermost layer is the finest (*BP* 2.2.28). Not even Brahma has been able to pierce that akasha edge, because it is the boundary of himself. According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, the only being other than Krishna and Arjuna to have pierced the outer edge of Brahma's body from the inside is Vishnu. As Dwarf standing on earth, Vishnu stepped upward and put the nail of his left toe through spacetime's dome; ever since, the pure waters in which it floats have been flowing through the hole down to earth as the Ganga River. The Ganga is thus the source of undefiled purity. She received that purity from the saffron she washed off Dwarf's foot when she bathed it on her way down through the cosmos. Ganga descends by way of Vishnupada, the Seven Seers, Moon, and Brahma's city on Mount Meru (*BP* 5.17.1–5).

Beyond the enormous pond of pure water from which Ganga flows, and in which Brahma's body floats, lies the ultimate limit of directional space and chronological time. In regard to the horizontal earth, that limit is a mountain range enclosing a fantastically wide circular region that includes everything. The mountain range separates directional space (*loka*) from space that is beyond directions (*aloka*), and is therefore called Lokaloka (*BP* 5.20–36). As noted, four elephants standing there define and stabilize the directions that organize the space within.

The mountainous wall of Lokaloka is so high that it reaches the realm of the pole star Dhruva. No light from the sun penetrates beyond it, and anything that manages to get beyond it dissolves. Only masters of unified consciousness (*yoga*) who can go beyond the limits of mental thought, it is said, can visually penetrate Lokaloka to see a "region" beyond that is difficult to imagine. It lies beyond the directions of space, it is golden, it shines like a mirror, and it

encompasses directional space by a "size" equal in width to the entire realm of bounded space from its center at Mount Meru to its Lokaloka edge (*BP* 5.20.34–42). That golden realm of nondirectional space is the Mother's womb; it holds the placental Lokaloka in which Brahma, her son, lives out his days and nights in its pure waters.

Within the "pond" of pure waters created by Lokaloka, Brahma lives a life of one hundred years. His years are made up of days and nights measured by his waking and sleeping. When he is awake, the cosmos appears; when he is asleep, it disappears. As Krishna told Arjuna: "Know that a day of Brahma lasts one thousand ages (*yuga*), and a night one thousand ages; people who know that know a day-and-night (*ahoratra*). At the beginning of the day, all manifest things spring forth from the unmanifest; at the beginning of night they dissolve into that which is known as unmanifest. The assembly of living beings (*bhutagrama)* thus comes into existence over and over, and as night begins it dissolves, O son of Prithu, springing forth at the beginning of day" (*BG* 8.17–19).

When Brahma sleeps, his body dissolves into the finest mode of matter, space (*akasha*); in an unmanifest mode its is said to sleep inside a closed lotus blossom in the pure waters enclosed by Lokaloka. When Brahma wakes up, the lotus blossom opens, the universe of spacetime emerges from the various parts of the lotus and his body, and Brahma begins his waking day. Floating in the pure waters inside Lokaloka, his ego consciousness resides on Mount Meru.

But Brahma does not live his life autonomously. Since he is the rebirth of Vasudeva by means of the Goddess, his father rules him through his mother. Krishna explained it this way: "All this moving universe is pervaded by me with an unmanifest form: all beings stand in me, and I do not stand in them. [Yet] beings do not stand in me, behold my unified consciousness that is sovereign (*yogam aishvaram*): Supporting beings and [yet] not standing in beings, my Self is the origin of beings. Just as the great wind stands in space and goes always and everywhere, so all beings stand in me; thus you should understand it" (*BG* 9:4–6). Here, if we understand space (*akasha*) to be the Satyaloka edge of Brahma's body, then the great wind (*vayu*) ceaselessly moving within it signifies the other six layers in constant motion as long as spacetime is visible. That space (*akasha*), then, dwells within the invisible matrix of pure waters inside the Goddess, whose is the womb belonging to Vasudeva.

As Brahma lives his days and nights inside the unmanifest Mother, he produces all beings from his body, a process that ultimately derives from the unmanifest Father: "All beings, O son of Kunti, pour into the [feminine] matter (*prakriti*) that belongs to me at the end of a cycle (*kalpa*), and again I emit them at the beginning of a cycle (*kalpa*). Grasping my own [feminine] matter, I emit again and again this whole unsubmissive collection of beings through the will of [feminine] matter" (*BG* 9.7–8). As we shall later see, that

pattern suggests a scene of royal domestic pleasure: Vasudeva eats a meal, falls asleep, and digests the food into an embryo. During the night he impregnates Sri Lakshmi with the embryo by "grasping matter." The Goddess transforms the embryo into Brahma the prince, who awakens for another day.

The Radiant Womb and Its "Owner"

Lokaloka, the all-enclosing placenta, is itself bounded by an undefined realm of radiant being, which is the uterus or womb. Anything put there, it is said, disappears altogether (*BP* 5.20.35). It is "great *brahman*" (*mahad brahma*), the unmanifest material womb (*yoni*) belonging to the "supreme *brahman*" (*param brahma*) as a wife belongs to the husband. As Krishna told Arjuna, Vasdudeva plants the embryo (*garbha*) from which all material forms emerge in that unmanifest womb, like a farmer who plants a seed in his field, from which an enormous *asvattha* tree filled with restless birds will grow: "My womb is great *brahman*, I place the embryo in it, and the coming into being of all living beings (*bhutani*) derives from that, O son of Bharata. In all wombs, O son of Kunti, whatever material form (*murti*) coalesces, great *brahman* is the womb, and I am the father that plants the seed (*bija*)" (*BG* 14.3–4). Once Vasudeva has planted the embryo in great *brahman*, his queen, she gestates it into their son, the prince. Yet the prince is named with the matronymic, Brahma; the patronymic Vasudeva is reserved for Krishna, for he is the father himself (*BG* 7.19).

But there is still more. Beyond Brahma's body, beyond the pure waters that envelop it, and beyond the unmanifest golden womb there is Vasudeva's Self embodied by "pure sattva." It is nondual and can only be perceived and discussed in the ignorant terms of duality. It is the highest unmanifest realm that Krishna told Arjuna was his supreme home (*dhama parama*) (*BG* 15.6). It is the kingdom of God called Vaikuntha, "the penetrating or irresistable realm." Vasudeva dwells there with his beloved Lakshmi and all beings there look like him (*BP* 3.15.14).

Vaikuntha, however, was not always impermeable to the power of unified consciousness. In the first manvantara of this kalpa, for example, Brahma's four Kumara sons went there by means of their yogic powers. When the gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya insulted them, the Bhagavan sent the two brothers into spacetime to be purified. They became Diti's two asura sons, Hiranyaksha (Golden Eyes) and Hiranyakashipu (Golden Clothes). Hiranyaksha seized Goddess Earth and pulled her down into the underworld waters, which caused the Bhagavan to appear as the Boar; that Boar embodied the sacrifice through which life on earth is generated. Boar slew Hiranyaksha, established a place for Goddess Earth above the waters, and infused her with the fire of his tejas to enable her to procreate (*BP* 3.13–19). Vedic sacrifice (*yajna*), as embodied by Boar, is the means to protect Earth and propagate life through her.

As time caused Brahma to age, however, such commerce between earth and Vaikuntha became exceptional. Therefore, in response to Lakshmi's request, the Lord of Vaikuntha (Vaikunthanatha) graciously made his realm accessible by establishing it on earth. That was during the fifth manvantara (*BP* 8.5.4–6). He placed it on the island called Three Peaks (Trikuta) in the Milk Ocean, northwest of Meru. Thereafter it was known as White Island (Shveta Dvipa). As Brahma's day grows later, Vaikunthanatha residing on that island involves himself directly in the affairs of devas, asuras, and humans. Like the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, whose Pure Land is also in the west, Vaikunthanatha on White Island listens attentively for cries of help emanating from Bharata.

Brahma's Body

Realms above and below Dhruva the Pole Star

Let us return to our universe of Brahma's body. Once we move from the cosmos as a whole to more immediate realms, the governing metaphor shifts to the opened lotus rising above the waters of a pond. The open blossom represents Goddess Earth spread out horizontally at the cosmic center, with visible portions rising upward and hidden portions descending down into the water. Its layered rows of petals represent her seven continents and oceans, and its central seed cup the great mountain Meru. Like a lotus seed cup, mount Meru is larger at the top than at the bottom.

Directly above Meru is the realm of atmosphere (*antariksha*), and above that is heaven (*dyaus*), which canopies Earth. Above heaven is Dhruva. Dhruva is the apex of the universe that we perceive with our eyes as the north star, or pole star, around which every other star and planet rotates.[2] When the constellations are visualized for meditation as a crocodile (*shishumara*), Dhruva is seen as the tip of its tail (*BP* 5.23.4–5).

Above Dhruva are worlds that do not burn up when Brahma's waking ego consciousness goes to sleep, but survive until he dies. They are called Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka (*BP* 2.7).[3] Satyaloka, "Realm of True Being," is the material element space (*akasha*) into which Brahma's ego ascends to sleep; it becomes the closed lotus blossom floating in the pure waters. On earth, the outermost continent called Pushkara (Lotus) signifies that outermost sheath of Brahma's body, and its brilliantly shining lotus blossom denotes the boundary of Brahma's body that folds into a closed lotus blossom to form a bedroom for his sleeping ego. From Dhruva upward, the four worlds are collectively known as "The Foot (or Step or Place) of Vishnu" (Vishnupada). They are beyond the reach of Yama, god of death. Souls who attain one of those Vishnupada worlds never again fall into rebirth, and they live as long as Brahma does (*BP* 4.12.24–40).

Below Dhruva are the worlds that burn up and flood during the periodical dissolution when Brahma's ego sleeps. Earth (*bhuloka*), atmosphere (*bhuvarloka*), and heaven (*svarloka*), with Atala below Earth, constitute the darkest, innermost, and densest portion of Brahma's body, the portion analogous to human flesh and blood consumed on the cremation pyre.

Sun and His Movements

Sun (Surya) is the Bhagavan in a form to measure the time of Brahma's body. He drives his chariot around the middle of the atmosphere, its single wheel running along the mountain range of Pushkara, the seventh and outermost continent that is Brahma's boundary. An axle stretches from that single wheel to Mount Meru at Earth's center; a rod connects the axle to the region of Dhruva above. Except for the underworlds, all inhabited realms of space—from the earth to the pole star—receive Sun's light in the sequence of dawn, midday, evening, and midnight. On Meru at the center, however, it is perpetually midday (*BP* 5.21.7–8).[4] Beneath earth, the worlds are "fallen," but are nevertheless gloriously filled with the pleasures of deluded senses. Yet Sun does not illuminate them; their light comes instead from shining gems on the hoods of huge resident snakes (*naga*) (*BP* 5.24.22).

Jambu, Bharata, and Purgatory

The central continent of Jambu is divided into nine regions (*varsha*). The central region, Ilavrita, surrounds great Meru on top of which Brahma's wakeful ego dwells in a square golden city (*BP* 5.17.28). The remaining eight regions distribute themselves in the cardinal directions like a row of lotus petals emanating from the seed cup (*BP* 5.16.7).[5] Three regions lie to the north, three to the south, and one each to the east and the west. Mountain ranges separate each region from one another, and each region borders the salt ocean that surrounds the continent (*BP* 5.16–19). Surrounded by eight mountain ranges, golden Mount Meru shines in the center like a blazing sacred fire.

The Ganga River, as it falls from the hole Dwarf's left toe made in the cosmic sphere, flows down through Dhruva's realm, through the heaven of devas and asuras, and onto the top of Mount Meru. There in Brahma's city she divides into four branches to flow in the four directions until she reaches the salt ocean surrounding Jambu. The branch named Alakananda flows southward across the Himalayas and down through Bharata as the Ganga River we know (*BP* 5.17.1 and 9; 9.9.1–15). Her other branches are beyond human reach.

Only one of those nine regions is the realm of intentional action (*karma*); only on Bharata, south of Meru, may individual souls act for merit or sin. Unlike any other place in the universe, chronology on Bharata operates in sets of

four ages (*yuga*), a thousand of which constitute a cycle (*kalpa*) of Brahma's daytime. In all other regions on Earth, time is like the Treta Yuga on Bharata and, not unlike the "pure lands" of the Mahayana Buddhists and Jainas, those regions are perpetually pleasant for the deserving souls who have been reborn there.

On Bharata, when a person's garment-like gross body of flesh and blood wears out and dies, Yama's deputies usually take the disembodied soul (*preta*) that had worn it southward to the purgatorial realm called Naraka. According to the image of Earth as an opened lotus blossom rising on its stalk above the water of a pond, the southern purgatory ruled by Yama (known also as Kala) is located between the lotus petals and the water. Yama's own capital lies on the southern side of the outermost mountain range "Beyond the Mind" (Manasottara), and Naraka lies somewhere nearby. As petitioners in a royal court do, ancestors (*pitri*) of various family lineages (*gotra*) reside at Naraka, meditating intensely on the Bhagavan in order to bring mercy to their descendents being purged. Nevertheless, Yama administers punishments to the souls strictly according to justice, for as a deva, Yama embodies Dharma.

Twenty-one divisions within Naraka specialize in specific types of punishment. Once punished, souls move into other realms of the worlds of rebirth according to their remaining karmic fruits, returning eventually to Bharata (*BP* 5.26). All beings below Dhruva envy humans on Bharata, because only there can a soul do what is necessary to escape from Brahma's body of spacetime altogether.

The Nine Regions of Bharata

According to Shuka, "the Bhagavan Narayana, who is the great Person," for the sake of grace toward persons (*purusha*), makes a "formation of his own reality" available in each region of the Jambu continent. The inhabitants of each region offer specific mantras and prayers to the formation present there. At the center in Ilavrita, for example, Rudra Shiva, who is the only male allowed to dwell in the Ilavrita region, dwells on Kailasa, one of the eight mountains that surround Meru; he is Ishana, the Lokapala of the northeast. There he worships the Plower formation as he appears directly below in the lowest realm, Patala (*BP* 5.17.14–24; 9.1.23–33; 9.16.27).

Crucial to my identification of the panels on the porch and vimana that represent the nine regions of Jambu are the description of the Bhagavan's form in each region, of the worshipers of each region, and of the content of the mantras and prayers they each offer. In turn, those identifications provided me a key for opening up the remainder of the cosmic mapping. Text illuminated image, and image illuminated text in a remarkable way. Briefly summarized, in the clockwise direction of circumambulation, the nine regions of the Jambu continent appear in the manner and sequence illustrated in Figure PIII.1. This

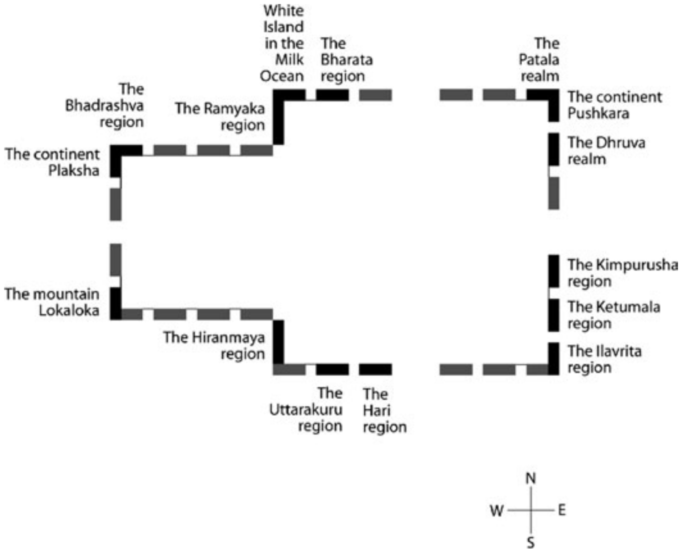


FIGURE PIII.1. Cosmography identified by sculpted panels on bottom-floor sanctum and porch. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

figure also shows the placement of representations of other cosmographic features.

The Rhythm of Brahma's Life

The entire realm of spacetime, we recall, results from Vasudeva planting embryonic consciousness in Shakti, the Goddess Sri Lakshmi, and letting her develop it. The resulting Brahma is a paradigmatic patriarch, perhaps modeled after the fourth, or *brahman*, priest in the shrauta sacrifices: he was to know all the Veda and sat south of the square eastern altar to supervise and correct the rites.

Let us review Brahma's career. Once Vasudeva has planted Brahma's embryonic form in the womb of the Goddess, she creates for him a subtle body; within that subtle body she develops a gross body. When the fetus is ready, Vasudeva creates a sense of "I" or "name" (*nama*) in it by bringing Brahma's time, karma, and essential nature (*svabhava*) into contact with the consciousness of the Self. Those three individuating variables were the material remainders of a previous "Brahma" who had died and was now being reborn (my interpretation of *BP* 2.5.32–35).

By following the patterns time and karma provided, and by developing in accord with his essential nature, Brahma transforms both the lotus-womb in which he gestates and his own body into the form of the fourteen worlds.

When he completes that development, his waking sense of "I" takes up residence in the densely material dimension at his bodily center to dwell on golden mount Meru.

As noted, once born, Brahma lives a one hundred years measured by days and nights. When night comes, his waking consciousness moves to the unmanifest state of sleep, a movement experienced by his gross body as a periodical dissolution of its layered form. Through fire and water, its dense and darkened layers dissolve into one another until only the most refined sheath of space (*akasha*) remains. That invisible material sheath, called Satyaloka or Bramaloka, which lasts the length of Brahma's life, takes the form of a lotus for his ego's sleep. But he does not sleep alone. Whatever souls may have escaped death during that dissolution dwell inside the closed *akasha* lotus, experiencing only sorrow for those whose ignorance keeps them in endless pain (*BP* 2.2.22–28). The lotus is at the "center" of the Unobstructed, now reclining in the "sleep of unified consciousness" (*yoganidra*).

In other words, Brahma is the Bhagavan's impassioned consciousness centered on a sense of "I am" and "This is mine." But of course the Bhagavan is more than ego-centeredness. While the Unobstructed sleeps, awakes, and sleeps again, Vasudeva watches. And the Unobstructed himself watches Brahma after his day has begun, wide awake, with a consciousness that has no ego. As Krishna told Arjuna: "And these acts of mine do not bind me, O Prize Winner, as one indifferent I sit unentangled among these acts. While I watch and preside, matter gives birth to the moveable and immoveable; by this means, O son of Kunti, the moving universe revolves" (*BG* 9.9–10).

When Brahma goes to sleep, it is as if the Unobstructed, who has been sitting on a throne made of the Plower snake to watch his son, now eats a meal. As the fiery mouth of Time, Vishnu consumes Brahma's gross body, just as the cremation fire consumes the corpse (*BG* 11). Having eaten, the Unobstructed lies down to sleep, and now the Plower snake is his bed. As he sleeps he digests the meal, transforming it into the embryo of the next day's ego-centered consciousness. Moreover, Pre-eminently Mighty passion produces dreams of what had happened in previous waking days, and what will happen when his ego awakes for the new day.

The Unobstructed begins to awaken with a sexual act. Lying on his snake bed, he ejaculates the embryo of Brahma into the lotus womb located at his navel. In narratives and sculptures, that ejaculation is portrayed as the akasha lotus rising upward from the navel of the reclining Unobstructed. The embryonic Brahma ascends the stalk to enter its lotus bud. The bud then opens, and Brahma—the Unobstructed's ego—is awake. Brahma's body and the lotus now unfold into the multilayered cosmos of spacetime, and the Unobstructed sits up on the Plower as his throne. Again he watches his own waking ego play the patriarch of a very large and very complex family in his residence on Mount Meru.

Representations of Earth on the Vimana and Porch

Let us now examine the way the temple's designers depicted the horizontal structure of Brahma's body. They selected four of spacetime's major divisions and used the Bhagavan's form as it appears in each division to represent them. Those four sculpted panels are at the corners of the walls facing west and east. They designate 1) Lokaloka, the encompassing edge of directional space; 2) Surya, chronological time operating within directional space: 3) Pushkara, Earth's outermost continent; and 4) Jambu, Earth's innermost continent. We shall consider each of those panels as viewers encounter them walking clockwise, beginning at the porch's southwest corner.

Lokaloka Enclosing Pure Water

The boundary of directional space at the level of the earth is the huge mountain range Lokaloka, the meeting place of directional space (*loka*) and nondirectional space (*aloka*). Beyond Lokaloka there is neither sunlight nor directions, but there is Time: great Time (*mahakala*), not measured by the sun, moon, and stars. It exists in Narayana's own being. All around the Lokaloka mountain range Vasudeva appears as the Supreme Great Person composed of pure sattva (*BP* 5.20.40). He infuses power into the elephants that define the quarters and into the Protectors of the World residing on at the edge of Brahma's body "Beyond the Mind" (Manasottara).

In Panel W2, Vasudeva on Lokaloka is sculpted sitting in royal ease with four faces turned to the four cardinal directions, for he is "God composed of all wonders, the Endless, with a face in every direction" (*BG* 11.11). People on Bharata granted the vision of him, like Arjuna on the Kuru battlefield, see him as Vishnu pervading the universe, facing them inward from each direction. Containing spacetime, he nurtures and protects it. And eventually, as Arjuna saw to his horror, he eats it (*BP* 5.20.40–42; *BG* 11.19–31). God eats his own gross body to allow his ego to sleep. As the manifestation of Time (Kala) (*BG* 11.32), Vishnu is the master of disorder (*nirriti*) who controls from within, which is why he is depicted at this southwest corner of the porch, where night's disorder (*nirriti*) begins.

The Continent of Plaksha and the Worship of Sun

To represent chronological time as built into directional space, the designers depicted Vasudeva's appearance as the deva Sun (Surya). He is the impermanent mode of Time (Kala), which propels Brahma's gross body by measuring out the year (*BP* 5.21–22; 3.11). Known as "Ruler of All" (Vishveshvara), Sun is the master of order who controls from the outside and protects at dawn

(*BP* 6.8.22). In the panel he is portrayed with four arms, flying above the continent called Plaksha. As he flies in the sky, the king of Plaksha and his seven sons look up to worship him. Their realm is beyond human reach, for Plaksha is the first continent beyond earth's Jambu center, enclosing it and the saltwater ocean surrounding it.

Placed at the north end of the porch, Panel W5 represents the period of night of about 2–4 a.m., just before "Brahma's hour" (*brahmamuhurta*). The viewer faces east toward the moving sun, but conceptually the sun is moving over Plaksha rather than over Bharata. As we recall, Surya's single-wheeled chariot drives around the middle of the atmosphere above the earth; his chariot axle links the outer and the inner continents into the single inhabited realm of Earth. When Sun appears over Plaksha in the east, we on Jambu cannot see him, because he is too far away. This panel signifies late-night darkness, and as viewers walk clockwise, they move toward Surya as he comes from the east. "Brahma's hour" of about 4–6 a.m. is represented by the next panel that comes into view: On the north end of the vimana's west-facing side, Boar, the embodiment of sacrifice, teaches Brahma during his hour ending night, the brahmamuhurta (Panel W6).

The Continent of Pushkara

The outermost continent is named Pushkara for the lotus (*pushkara*) that shines on it. It marks the outer limit of inhabited Earth. The nonhuman inhabitants of Pushkara worship Vasudeva reborn as his son, Brahma, whose lotus has thousands and millions of petals shining like flames. Panel E1, which depicts Brahma and the lotus facing east, stands on the north corner of the east-facing wall. Brahma is portrayed worshiping Surya at sunrise. In cosmography, the panel denotes the all-encompassing sheath of space (*akasha*) that is the outer edge of Brahma's body. Pushkara is the domain of Brahma's "enlightened" consciousness in contrast to his "darkened" ego awake on Mount Meru.

The Center of Space and Brahma's Ego Awake

The center of directional space is the Ilavrita region where Mount Meru stands. At the south end of the vimana's east-facing wall (Panel E6), that region is represented by two standing males, each with four arms. One is a form of the Bhagavan and the other is a form of Rudra Shiva. Shiva dwells in Ilavrita on the mountain Kailasa, and because Vasudeva is the source of his own ability to destroy all embodied beings, including Brahma himself, Shiva worships Vasudeva's formations (*BP* 5.17.11–24).

Through delusion (*tamas*), the Plower formation creates the sense of "I" (*ahamkara*) in Brahma and in all his descendents, including humans. In both

Brahma and in humans, it is the deluded ego that sustains the gross body, that accounts for its aging and dying, and that brings about rebirth. The "I" is propelled by the passionate desire to create a world for itself with itself as the center; Brahma's emanation of the cosmos out of his own body is the paradigm for that fact. The ego's propelling desire, of course, derives from the Pre-eminently Mighty, the formation that emerges from the Plower as the Goddess unfolds the universe.

The panel itself suggests that the Plower has already reformed himself into the Pre-eminently Mighty. It depicts Shiva with four arms and matted hair standing on Mount Kailasa in the central region of Ilavrita; he turns toward the crowned Bhagavan with four arms, who is slightly longer and taller. Apparently, Shiva, who worships the Plower as he appears in Patala, is doing so here by means of the Pre-eminently Mighty, for in the manner of all formations, the Plower remains present in a hidden manner.

That "visual text" provides four sophisticated ideas with playful irony. First, we know that the Pre-eminently Mighty formation produces the deva Kama, and that Shiva produces the deva Skanda. We may therefore read the panel as Skanda worshiping Kama. Second, since Skanda was born to Krishna by Jambavati as his son Samba, and Kama was born to Krishna by Rukmini as his son Pradyumna, we may also read it as Samba venerating his older half-brother Pradyumna (*BP* 3.1.28–30; 10.61.8–12). Third, since Samba embodies anger (*krodha*) and Pradyumna embodies desire (*kama*), and since anger derives from frustrated desire, the panel may be read as anger venerating its own source. That relates to the fourth reading: Shiva worships Kama, the deva he had turned to ashes with the blazing fire of his third eye.

As the Tamil poet Goda (Antal) reveals, Bhagavatas used the half-brothers Pradyumna and Samba together to represent the fullness of the Pre-eminently Mighty formation. In the first stanza of her *Nacchiyar Tirumoli*, dated to the early ninth century, she enlisted Krishna's sons Pradyumna and Samba for a prolonged ceremony. Its goal was to bring her to Krishna in the Vrindavana forest, which was the way she envisioned the standing icon on distant Mount Venkatam over three hundred miles north of her town. In her vision, Pradyumna appears as the invisible Kama, whose body Shiva had already turned to ash. The poem is discussed below in chapter 14. Around the same period, the Tamil poet Poykai composed a stanza that correlates remarkably with this panel, *Tiruvantati* 74. As we shall see in chapter 14, Poykai expressed puzzlement at how to distinguish two males who, like brothers standing side by side, closely resemble each other.

Finally, the allusion to Samba in this panel foreshadows destructive events represented around the corner by the Krishna panel on the vimana's south-facing side. By dressing as a pregnant woman, Prabhasha, Samba was the occasion for the destruction of Krishna's Vrishni clan, for the "death" of Krishna himself, and for the onset of the Kali Yuga. During the Vrishnis'

drunken slaughter, Krishna's two sons disrupted the balanced scene of this panel and fought each other to their deaths (*BP* 11.1 and 30).

The Sequence of the Four Panels

Another Tamil stanza suggests that the sequence of these four panels—Vasudeva as encompassing container, Vasudeva as Sun, Brahma and the shining lotus, and Shiva venerating the Bhagavan—was customary by the time the temple was built. The poet called Bhutam, from the Kanchipuram region, noted the same sequence in *Irantan-tiruvantati* 12, with this difference: After stating that all people should worship the Unobstructed as reclining on the Plower snake, he described the sequence of worship leading to him:

> Neither he there nor he here,
> no one at all,
> Should avoid worshiping and praising
> The foot of him whose couch is the Snake,
> For even [Surya] with abundant light
> shining everywhere,
> And [Brahma] in the radiant flower,
> And [Shiva] with the eye in his forehead,
> By nature seek him out every day to worship,
> Do they not?

If Bhutam predated this Vishnu-house, he either reported his own circumambulation of another temple similarly organized, or he visualized a circumambulation in his mind.[6] If he was contemporary with Nandivarman, he may in fact have visited this Vishnu-house. In that case, we may imagine that after he worshiped the formations of the bottom sanctum, Bhutam exited the bottom sanctum and crossed the bridge to the prakara walkway and walked northward to venerate Sun at the porch's northwest corner. He then walked eastward to venerate Brahma and the shining lotus at the northeast corner. Then he walked southward to venerate Shiva with the Bhagavan at the southeast corner. Perhaps he then backtracked to the small eastern bridge to cross the "moat" into the vimana and walked up the south stairway to the middle-floor sanctum. There he worshiped "the foot of him whose couch is the Snake."

Representations of Day-and-night, Month, and Age

If we keep in mind that the porch on the middle floor and the porch on the bottom floor extend the temple's west-facing side and develop its meanings, we can correlate their respective panels with the divisions of chronological time.

That allows us to discern representations of the day-and-night (*ahoratra*), the months (*masa*) that divide the solar year (*samvatsara*), and the four ages (*yuga*) found only on Bharata.

The four ages (*chaturyuga*) are represented in a subtle numerical manner. Each age is represented by a number: The years of the perfect Krita Yuga consist of a set of four, those of the Treta Yuga a set of three, those of the Dvapara Yuga a set of two, and those of the Kali Yuga a set of one. That totals ten, but the junctures (*samdhya*) between the ages brings the total of the whole Chatur Yuga set to twelve.

Twelve, of course, corresponds to the number of months in a year (*samvatsara*), and year itself signifies a day-and-night (*ahoratra*). Accordingly, the most perfect Krita (or Satya) Yuga, represented by the number four, corresponds to "Brahma's hour" that ends night. The Treta Yuga of the number three corresponds to sunrise and morning. The Dvapara Yuga of the number two corresponds to midday, afternoon, sunset. And the Kali Yuga of the number one corresponds to night.

If we assign the junctures (*samdhya*) of the ages to the corners of the vimana, and move in the clockwise direction, we may recognize those four ages in the panels between the corners. On the north-facing side, the fourfold Krita Yuga appears as all four panels. On the east-facing side, the threefold Treta Yuga appears as its first three panels. On the south-facing side, the twofold Dvapara Yuga appears as its first two panels. And on the west-facing side, the singular Kali Yuga appears as a single panel duplicated on either side of the porch entrance. Other meanings encoded in this highly sophisticated "literary" monument will be discussed in the concluding chapters.

To document this analylsis of the vimana's bottom floor, we shall now turn to the details of its sculpted panels. They follow the mandala we discussed in chapter 5, which governs the middle sanctum's depiction of God's subtle body. Here on the bottom floor of the vimana and its porch, however, that mandala governs God's gross body.

11

The Vimana Panels on the Western Side

To enter inside the prakara wall enclosing the Vishnu-house, visitors must first pass through a dark hall (*mandapa*) without windows and walk eastward toward sunlight shining through the doorway ahead. When they then pass through that doorway, the entire western face of the porch comes into view, blazing in sunlight. Symbolically, they have just emerged from the nighttime darkness of the Kali Yuga into the brillant light of God's body.

Directly in front of them, a small bridge leads across the drainage "moat" to the doorway of the porch. Through that porch is the bottom-floor sanctum where Vasudeva sits facing west. On either side of the porch's doorway stand guardians. Each guardian is flanked by a lion standing on its hind legs, and on each side of those standing lions is a Kalki panel. After each Kalki panel, a sculpted panel terminates the porch wall at its north and south corners.

This chapter begins the discussion of the sculpted program of the vimana on the bottom floor. All four sides of the vimana mandala contain six panels each. The two corner panels of each side define the content of the four panels they bracket; the vyuha formation gazing from the sanctum hidden inside through the side's central opening determines this content. We shall discuss each side, beginning with the two corner panels and then the four panels they frame. Each panel of a side will be numbered 1–6, beginning to the viewer's right. Since visitors encounter the western side immediately upon entering through the prakara gateway, we shall begin with it and proceed clockwise. Because this is a mandala, the porch will

be thought of as flush with the mandala's western side (Figure 11.1). The four panels on the face of the porch are to be thought of as bracketed by the corner panels in a continuous sequence of six panels, as shown in Figure 11.2, which depicts the mandala with the porch extended on the western side. The panels on the northern and southern sides of the porch will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

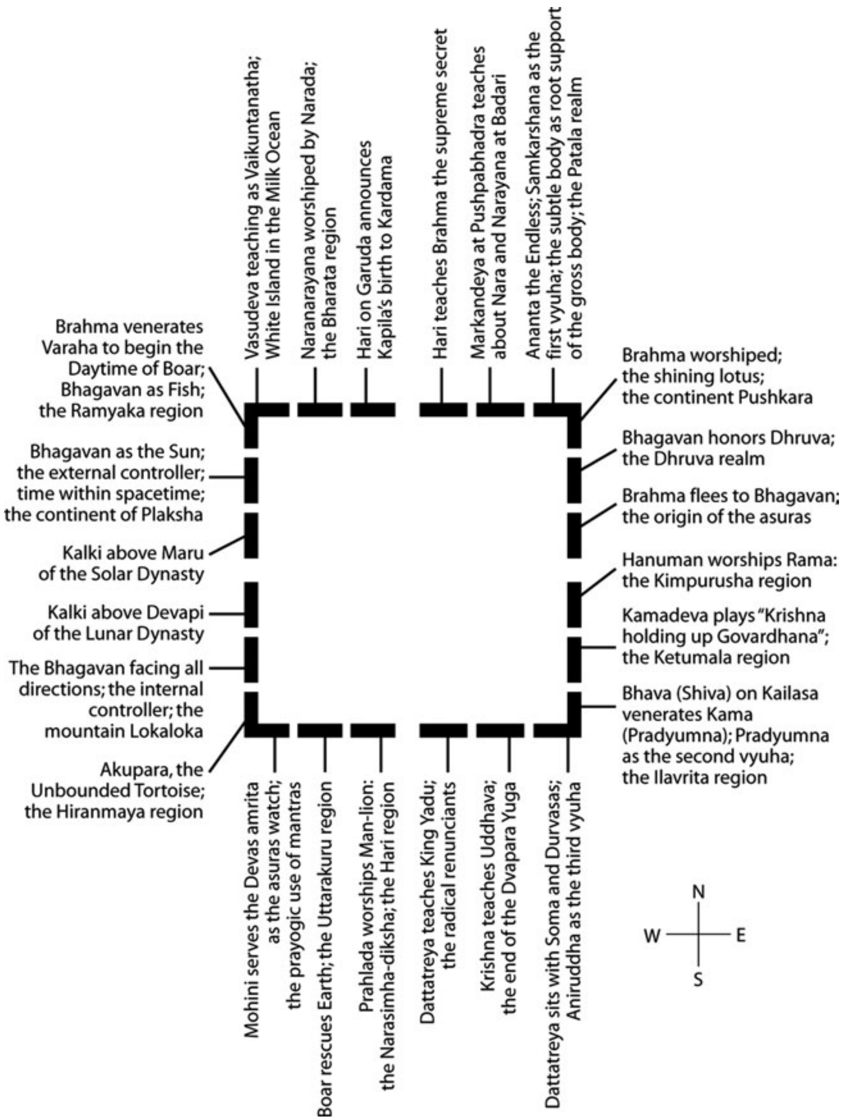


FIGURE 11.1. Bottom-floor vimana with collapsed porch. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

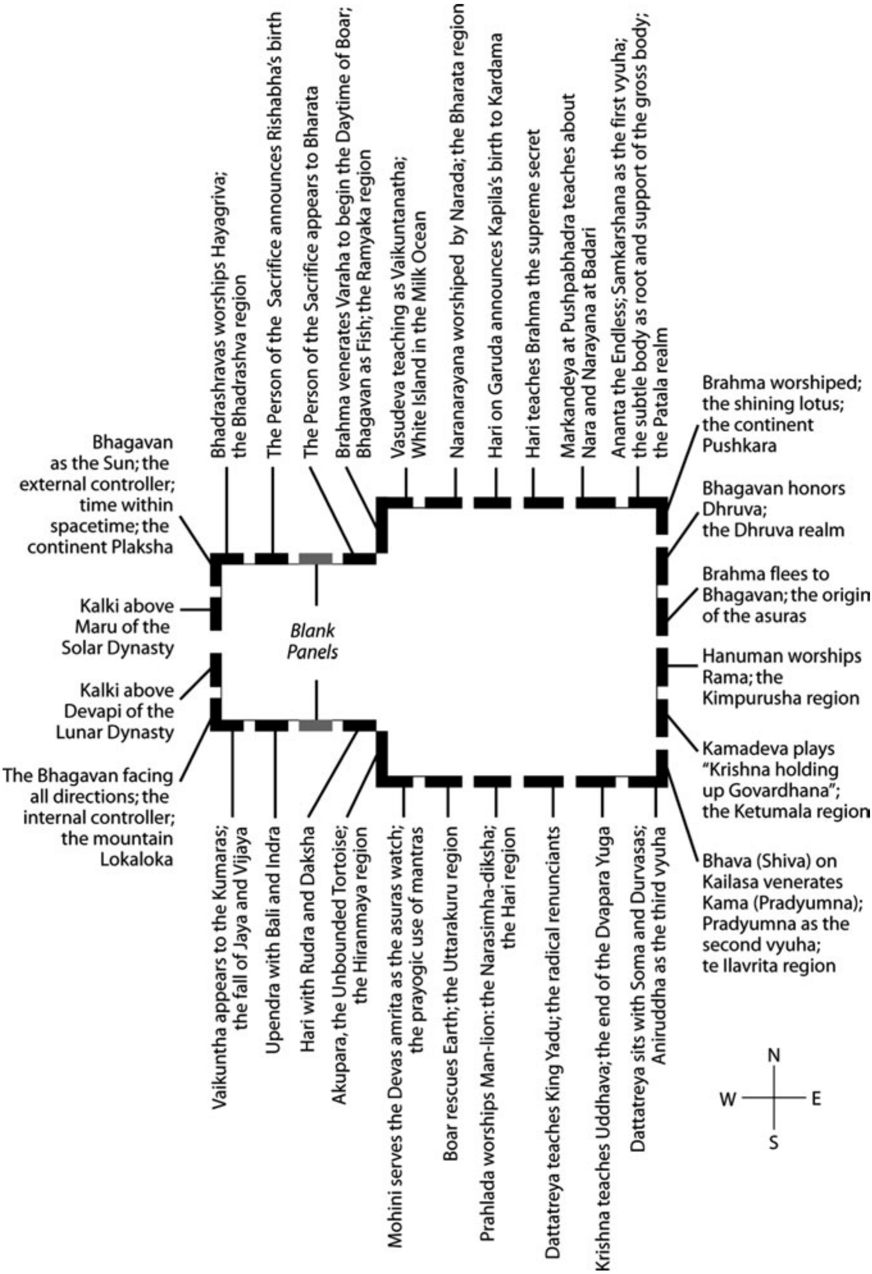


FIGURE II.2. Bottom floor: Porch and vimana sculpted panels. Drawing by Case and Sandgren.

The Corner Panels of the Vimana's Western Side

Panel W1: The Unbounded Tortoise (Akupara)

The Story. In the region called Hiranmayavarsha (Made of Gold), Aryama worships the Bhagavan as the Tortoise (Kurma). Its representation here is not immediately evident because the figure of the Bhagavan does not resemble a tortoise. But according to the story (*BP* 5.18.29–33), in the region Made of Gold, the leader of the ancestors (*pitri*) named Aryama worships Tortoise. Shuka made that clear when he described the region to Parikshit (*BP* 5.18.29). Yet in his prayer, Aryama does not address him as Tortoise (Kurma), but as Akupara, which means the "Unbounded." Aryama begins his prayer this way: "Veneration to the Bhagavan, to the Unbounded distinguished by all qualities of pure being, whose place has never been traced, beyond all regions, present everywhere, containing everything, whose form is this world of multiple forms projected by maya" (*BP* 5.18.31). Aryama then praises him as the manifest world of moving and unmoving multiplicity, which sages learned in metaphysical calculation (*samkhya*), have divided into twenty-four categories. The Unbounded, he concludes, is the true meaning of Samkhya.

The reason the Unbounded took on the bounded form of a tortoise is explained in the story of the Churning of the Milk Ocean during the sixth manvantara. As we recall from chapter 7, when devas and asuras were using the golden mountain Mandara as churning paddle and the snake Vasuki as churning rope, they could not hold up Mandara because of its weight. Vishnu therefore assumed the form of a gigantic tortoise, entered the ocean, and held the mountain up on its back like an island in the sea. Tortoise felt the twirling of the Mandara mountain as pleasant back-scratching.

During the churning, Tortoise breathed in and out, creating the steady inhalation and exhalation of Brahma's body. Soothed by Mandara's scratching, he gradually went to sleep and is still there in the bottom of the waters. We who are limited by ignorance see his regular breathing in the ocean's high and low tides (*BP* 12.13.2). As Tortoise fell asleep, various items arose from the churning, including the death-giving kalakuta poison, which Rudra-Shiva keeps in his throat, and the life-giving amrita, which Dhanvantari brought up in a pot and devas and asuras fought over. As depicted on the north side of middle floor (Panel 7), an asura stole the pot. Mohini later seduced the asuras into giving her the amrita and distributed it to the devas (*BP* 8.7.8–12), as portrayed on this same southwest corner of the vimana, but facing south (Panel S6).

The Panel. The tall and crowned Akupara the Unbounded stands off-center to the north on a short pedestal (Figure 11.3). He faces forward but turns his body slightly southward so that worshipers on the circumambulation path may



FIGURE 11.3. Panel W1: Akupara, the Unbounded Tortoise. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

see him directly. He has the shape of a man with two pairs of arms, the wheel and conch held in the back, as usual. His front right hand rests on his hip. He raises his front left arm to form a mudra at the level of his shoulder, but damage has made it indecipherable; perhaps it was the "Mudra of the Tortoise" (*kurmamudra*), which the figure above to his left forms with his right hand.

To Akupara's left stands the shorter Aryama, the overlord of pitris or ancestors, the top of whose crown or matted hair reaches almost to the wrist of the Bhagavan's left hand. Aryama faces forward but turns slightly toward the Bhagavan as he gazes up, forming the anjalimudra of veneration with his two

hands. Three persons of this region appear at the top of the panel aligned with the Bhagavan's crowned head. The middle figure marks the panel's central axis running down the left side of the Bhagavan's head to the little toe of his left foot; this male raises his right arm and appears to open his hand with the palm facing forward at the level of his chin. The male north of him (partially hidden behind the panel frame and the wheel) faces the Bhagavan and gazes down on him as he raises his left hand to touch his face or ear; his right arm may have broken off. The more fully exposed figure to the south is directly above Aryama. He faces forward, turns toward the Bhagavan, appears to rest his left hand on his hip, and with his right hand at his breast forms the kurmamudra: a closed fist with the thumb placed inside the curled fingers turned toward the viewer (*PS* 1974: no. 80).

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The Bhagavan depicted here does not have the form of a tortoise, but its placement makes that identity clear in two ways. First, in the clockwise direction, it appears right after the Mohini panel. That matches the way Shuka summarized the story of the Milk Ocean churning. Vishnu as the supporter of Mandara, he said, was the basis for the churning, for the emergence of amrita, and for the appearance of Mohini who fed it to the devas (*BP* 8.12.45–47). Second, the panel's southwest location matches the location of the ancestors, whose leader Aryama in the Hiranmayavarsha region worships Tortoise. Many ancestors led by Aryama do not live in that region, however, but in Yama's purgatorial realm, Naraka. It lies near Yama's capital southward on the circular mountain range Manasottara (Beyond the Mind). Purgatory lies below earth, but above the waters, perhaps to the southwest. In order to bring blessings to their descendents when they are brought for punishment, the ancestors dwelling there meditate on the Bhagavan intensely. Yama is their king (*pitriraja*), and Aryama is their overlord (*pitriganadhipati*) (*BP* 5.18.26 and 5.26.4–6).

Since Aryama prays to the Unbounded and does not mention his tortoise form, designers of the Vishnu-house did not have to portray an actual tortoise (although Raghunathan, Tagare, and Tapasyananda all translated *akupara* as "tortoise"). Such freedom was not possible in the cases of other animal forms, Man-lion and Boar for example, because the prayers addressed to them specifically mention their animal forms and depend on them for their meanings.

Moreover, the bounded form the Unbounded took signifies Yoga, which is the practical application of the samkhya metaphysical system identified by Aryama with Akupura. The five limbs of the tortoise (four legs and neck) represent the yogin's five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching); when withdrawn, they represent the yogin's withdrawal from their objects, immersed only in the sixth sense, the mind. Krishna told Arjuna that the person immersed in the enstasy of steady insight (*prajna*) is a silent sage (*muni*) envisioning the Supreme, like a tortoise (*kurma*) with limbs drawn inside its

shell (*BG* 2.54–59). The yogin in samadhi is an unmoving rocklike body of consciousness.

At the same time, Tortoise at the bottom of the waters represents the "root support" (*muladhara*) of Brahma's subtle body of consciousness as he engages in yogic praxis. In the Bhagavata Yoga that Krishna explained to Uddhava (*BP* 11.14–15), Tortoise corresponds to that fundamental "wheel" (*chakra*), which in the human body is located at the base between the anus and genitalia. The disciplined breathing of the yogin's pranayama, with its steady movement of inhalation and exhalation, matches Tortoise's breathing seen by us in the tides of the salt ocean. That ocean, of course, represents restless consciousness filled with "graspers," which the yogin's pranayama seeks to pacify, purify, and unify.

In other words, this panel reveals Brahma to be the paradigmatic yogin, who begins his practice during the sixth manvantara of his daytime. We who live in the seventh manvantara live with its results, namely, the products churned up from Brahma's mantra-infused consciousness represented by the Milk Ocean.

When the yogin performs his sadhana, he appears to be asleep like a tortoise with limbs withdrawn, but according to Yoga theory, he is in fact moving his "wakefulness" (*bodhi*) inwardly upward through his subtle body along the sushumna channel of the subtle body that parallels the spine. Depending on the goal sought, it moves through chakras from the "root support" (*muladhara*) at the base of the spine to the "suture of Brahma" (*brahmarandhra*) at top of the head (*BP* 11.15.24).

That upward journey is represented by the ritual implement called khatvanga. The khatvanga depicts a spine topped by one or more skulls. The Goddess Kali holds it when she emerges from Chandika Durga's forehead (*DM* 7.5–9 and 15), and it is important to prayogic rites performed by Bhagavatas, Shaivas, and Buddhists.[1] As we know from the tenth label on the prakara inscription that records Pallavamalla's consecration as "Indra of Men," the khatvanga was one of several items important to his rule: "After entering the palace, the body of ministers, the men of the great assembly, the men of the two ganas, and the members of the ghatika, all came together to anoint him: With the name Nandivarman, with the karivai umbrella for his chariot, [the conch] with the voice of the sea, the khatvanga staff, the bull crest . . . , and issuing commands under the royal seal of Vitelvituku, they anointed him."[2]

According to Kalikanri in his poem about the temple, Nandivarman used the khatvanga as part of his righteous rule.[3] The poet correlated its conquering power (*tejas*) with that of Man-lion: "One day, in the shape of a lion / With nails sharp as diamond, / The Lord fighting the Valorous One / Clawed his waist and tore it open, / And in beautiful Kacci / Encircled by mansions / He has His place, // The Vishnu-house which the Emperor serves, / The Sovereign who rules the Pallavas / In the shade of his White Umbrella / after he raised / the

Spear and Banner / of the khatvanga / spine of bones / high above the army" (*PT* 2.9.6). Here the khatvanga signifies the practical or prayogic use of sadhanas sponsored by the emperor for conquest, which is the meaning it has for the Goddess Kali when she emerges from Chandika Durga's forehead. Significantly, Chandika Durga's mount is the lion; through the khatvanga, Kalikanri linked her lion to Man-lion. In both cases, the lion—a favored Pallava emblem—signifies the Bhagavan's power, either as jnana in his Plower formation, or as tejas in his Unobstructed formation.

According to Krishna, during the internal upward journey of "awakenedness," the yogin may choose to generate up to eighteen supernormal powers (*siddhi*) and five subsidiary ones (*BP* 11.15.3–36). Some of them—such as the control of others, clairvoyance, entering the bodies of others, physically moving by thought alone, or assured victory—are examples of prayoga, the practical application of mantras through ritual acts. Others—such as the attainment of transcendent joy or the purity of the Lord of White Island—are examples of siddhis that lead to the ultimate purpose of yoga, which is not the generation of miraculous powers but rather the perception of Vasudeva Krishna dwelling within as the Self. He is the source of all siddhis, and of yoga, samkhya, dharma, and of the doctrine of *brahman* (*brahmavada*).

The Bhagavatas used the khatvanga to signify that final goal as well as the penultimate prayogic goal of conquest. We learn that from the story in the *Bhagavata Purana* of the king whose name was Khatvanga (*BP* 9.9.41–9.10.4). King Khatvanga was progenitor of the Raghu Dynasty into which Hari was born in four portions (*amsha*): Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna, the subjects of the famous *Ramayana* by Valmiki. King Khatvanga was invincible in battle and devas used him to help them defeat asuras. But when he learned that he had only one hour (*muhurta*) left to live, King Khatvanga turned all of his yogic skill toward Narayana to attain the supreme *brahman*. That supreme *brahman* is so subtle (*sukshma*) that some, like the Buddhists, the story says, see it as empty (*shunya*). But King Khatvanga knew it not to be empty (*ashunya*), but to be Vasudeva, God in whom all things dwell and who dwells in all things.

Interestingly, the Unbounded as Tortoise at the bottom of the waters in Brahma's body is analogous to the Plower as the Snake called Endless (Ananta). Ananta holds the body of the awakened Brahma on one of his many hoods as Brahma creatively churns out the events of his day. Supporting Brahma from beneath, Endless meets Unbounded at the muladhara chakra at the base of Brahma's subtle body. Since Bhagavata Yoga employs the wheel or chakra mandala known as Beautiful to See (Sudarshana), we may now understand why the *Paushkara-samhita* said that Sudarshana as "support" (*adhara*) is to be visualized both as Tortoise and as the endless snake Ananta (*Paushkara-samhita* 22; Smith 1975: 284).

Finally, the Unbounded Tortoise at the base of Brahma's body points toward the ultimate goal of Bhagavata Yoga, which is upward through Brah-

ma's body to Satyaloka and then out through the top of Brahma's own suture (*brahmarandhra*). That goal is Vaikuntha, and is depicted on the south-facing corner panel of the porch (Panel SP3). Vaikuntha, we recall, is the ultimate realm of the supreme *brahman* from which Jaya and Vijaya fell to become Vishnu's archenemies: Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu, Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and Shishupala and Dantavaktra.

We can now summarize several of the meanings of the panel: First, it represents the Region Made of Gold, the second region northward from Meru on the continent Jambu. Second, placed at the southwest corner of Nirriti's disintegration, this panel denotes the first period of night. Third, by means of Aryama, the overlord of ancestors, it signifies the realm of Yama, Son of the Sun or Vaivastava, for Yama is Aryama's king. Yama's realm lies far to the south between Earth and the dark waters of the underworld Rasa, where Naraka or Purgatory, with its twenty-one degrees of punishment, exists. Pitri ancestors reside there to seek blessings for their gotra lineages by means of supreme and true samadhi (*BP* 5.26.4–37). Their overlord Aryama, however, worships Akupara in the region Made of Gold far to the north.

Fourth, Aryama's prayer to Akupara identifies him as the Tortoise who appears in an ancient story of creation by Prajapati, Master of Progeny, told in the *Shatapatha Brahmana* (6.1.1.12–15; 6.1.3.1–7; 6.5.1.2–3; 7.5.1.1–11). Prajapati firsts creates *brahman* as a foundation. By means of Vach, his Speech, he then produces waters, and he inseminates these waters with *brahman*. This produces an egg or embryo (*anda*). Prajapati compresses the embryo and throws it into the waters. Its juice becomes the Tortoise. The water above Tortoise is muddy with dissolved earth. Prajapati's tapas heats this muddy water and foam emerges. Out of this foam come nine creations that constitute Bhumi or Earth. Prajapati then spreads out Bhumi, and in the form of Agni or Fire enters her. Everything that is emerges from this primordial copulation. Tortoise, we note, is beneath Bhumi, yet Tortoise is the life-sap of everything, for Tortoise encompasses all things even as he supports them. His bottom shell is this earthly world, his upper shell is the sky above, and air is the space in between.

The Pancharatra Agama teaches a visualization (*dhyana*) of this account in terms of the Bhagavan's throne. The base of this cosmic throne is seen as the Bhagavan's Supporting Power (*adharashakti*). On it rests the Tortoise (Kamatha), which is unbounded pure matter as the aggregate of all things and their stability. The Snake Ananta rests on the Tortoise. And the elements of the brahmanda universe rests on one of Ananta's many hoods.[4] By means of these allusions, this panel introduces the brahmanda as the theme of this bottom-floor vimana: The sphere of Brahma is God's gross body (*sthulasharira*), a shape constituted of many shapes but incomprehensible to those living inside it (*BP* 5.26.38). Ananta, the Endless mode of matter on whose hood this brahmanda rests, appears diagonally opposite at the southeast corner (Panel N6 discussed in chapter 13).

This panel further signifies the inside of the brahmanda, where Vishnu rests on the bottom of the Milk Ocean as Tortoise again. In the sixth Manu Term, Hari takes the wondrous shape of the Primordial Tortoise (Adikacchapa). He is on the bottom of the Milk Ocean to prop up the mountain Mandara during its churning; still there, his steady breathing in and out creates the inhalation and exhalation of Brahma's body, which we perceive in the ocean's high and low tides (*BP* 8.7.8–10; 12.13.2).

Panel W6: Brahma Venerates Varaha to Begin the Daytime of Boar

THE STORY. Brahma's life of one hundred Brahma-years is divided into halves. In the first half Brahma is born of Sound (Shabdabrahma). In the second half he is born in a Lotus Blossom (Padmabrahma). The first day of this second half of his lifetime is known as the Varaha Kalpa, Daytime of Boar (*BP* 3.11.33–34; 3.12–13).[5] This panel illustrates the reason why.

Brahma is the embodied form that "*brahman's* sound" (*sabdabrahman*) takes when it is both unmanifest and manifest (*BP* 3.12.48). The moving universe (*jagat*) is a materialization of that sound, because Brahma transformed his own body and mind into it. But first he had to organize the Plower's self-imposed ignorance (*ajnana*) that was his own basis, which he did by emitting a sequence moving from the darkest to less dark modes of consciousness: "complete darkness" (*andhatamisra*), "darkness" (*tamisra*), "great confusion" (*mahamoha*), "infatuation" (*moha*), and "delusion" (*tamas*) (*BP* 3.12.2).[6]

Having necessarily, but regretfully, emitted those worst of sins (*papiyasin*), Brahma brought then forth their opposites, the four princes (*kumara*) named Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanatkumara. But they would not procreate when he told them to and remained celibate sages (*BP* 3.12.4–5). Angered by their disobedience, Rudra Shiva emerged from between Brahma's eyes; he was the dark blue firstborn of devas. Brahma gave Rudra Shiva eleven names and eleven wives, who produced fierce replicas of him known as the Eleven Rudras (Ekadasarudra). The Eleven Rudras began devouring on all sides. At Brahma's urging, Rudra Shiva retired himself and his names to perform tapas, for it is a quick way to attain the Bhagavan as Supreme Light (*BP* 3.12.3–20).

Brahma then produced a second set of children, ten sons from other parts of his body and mind, who would be willing to propagate and populate the universe. They were the class of sages called "lord of progeny" (*prajapati*), and were named Marichi (mind), Atri (eye), Angirasa (mouth), Pulastya (ear), Pulaha (navel), Kratu (hand), Bhrigu (skin), Vasishtha (breath), Daksha (thumb), and Narada (lap). He then produced a third set of nine: Dharma from his right breast where Narayana himself abides, and Adharma from his back, from which Death arises to terrify the world; Kama (desire) came from his heart, Krodha (anger) from his brow, Lobha (greed) from his lower lip, Vach

(speech) from his mouth, rivers from his penis, and Nirriti (disorder), the refuge of all sins, from his anus (*BP* 3.12.21–27).[7]

Since Brahma is sound (*shabda*), it is not surprising that he felt desire for speech (*vach*). Unfortunately, Vach was his own daughter, born from his mouth. Brahma's sons severely criticized his incestuous passion and, feeling ashamed, he abandoned his body. That abandoned body of incestuous shame became darkness in the four directions (*BP* 3.12.28–34).

Nevertheless, Brahma pursued his task. He emitted Veda from four faces in the sequence found in the so-called honeycomb mandala: *Rig* facing east, *Yajur* facing south, *Sama* facing west, and *Atharva* facing north (*BP* 3.12.34–48). Then he took on another form called Body (*Kaya*). He divided Body into a male and female couple (*mithuna*) named Svayambhuva Manu and his wife Shatarupa. They were the paradigm for sexual reproduction through the "dharma of couples" (*BP* 3.12.49–56). Brahma instructed them to have children who would protect Goddess Earth through Dharma and sacrifice to the Bhagavan who "excites people" (Janardana) (*BP* 3.12.49–56).

Svayambhu Manu agreed, of course, but said that Goddess Earth first had to be lifted up from the great ocean of Rasa (Taste) where she had somehow gone during Brahma's emanating activities. "May he, from whose heart I came, do it for me," Brahma said, and out of his nostril dropped a tiny boar (*varaha*) the size of a thumb (*BP* 3.13).

Instantly, while Brahma, Marichi, the Kumaras, and Svayambhu Manu watched, the tiny boar grew to the size of an elephant. While they pondered that perplexing figure who oddly had come out of Brahma's nose, the mountainous Boar, Sacrifice as Person, roared, thrilling everyone and causing the residents of the Jana, Tapas, and Satya worlds to praise him with the *Rig*, *Yajur*, and *Sama Veda*.

As if he were the elephant Gajendra at play, Boar dived into the water (*BP* 3.13.26), recalling the Gajendra panel, Panel 5, at this same corner above on the middle floor. In the waters of Rasa he found Goddess Earth and lifted her up on his tusks. But a daitya appeared and attacked him; we later learn that he was the asura Hiranyaksha (Golden Eyes) (*BP* 3.18.18). Boar slew that demon, covering himself with red blood as if Gajendra were digging red earth in play. Then the bloody Boar stood in his dark blue body holding Goddess Earth on his white tusks while Brahma and the others praised him as Karanasukara, the Causal Boar whose shape is identical to the yajna sacrifice. Goddess Earth is Mother, Causal Boar is Father, and he emits his tejas into her so that she may produce all things (*BP* 3.13.30–33). His posture visually stated that the stability and fecundity of earth derives from the sacrificial rites of Veda patronized by its ruler (*BP* 3.13.41). Boar then stabilized the waters with his hoofs, placed Goddess Earth on them, and vanished (*BP* 3.13.46–47).

THE PANEL. The panel depicts Varaha just after he appears from Brahma's nostril and swells up, but before he descends into the Rasa waters (Figure 11.4). The Bhagavan as Varaha with four arms stands on the south facing westward toward the viewer, but is oriented slightly to the north. His back two arms are not visible, but the conch is above his left shoulder and the wheel is above his right shoulder, with its edge facing forward as a prayogachakra, the wheel thrown as a missle. His front left hand rests on his left hip and his front right arm bends up at the elbow; its hand at the level of the right breast is now missing, but probably held a mudra, perhaps one signifying instruction. He has the snout, eyes, and ear of a boar, but the tusks are missing, and he is crowned.

To his right stands Brahma with four arms, bending slightly at the knees. His back two arms are difficult to see due to damage, but he holds the anjalimudra at the middle of his chest. Brahma has four faces, three of them visible, but now damaged (Figure 11.5). The face on his left (south) is damaged but obvious with its own distinct crown; the one on his right (north) is missing; the one in the middle (west) gazes slightly downward as if reverentially listening to Varaha at his left.

Four two-armed figures facing forward and holding the anjalimudra stand above Brahma and Varaha. They are the Kumaras. A small figure flies or kneels to the left of Varaha at the level of his head, and remains of a similar figure between the heads of Varaha and Brahma are visible. A third figure probably stood to the right of Brahma's head but has disappeared along with his right head. They are Marichi, Svayambhuva Manu, and presumably his wife Shatarupa.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The panel represents the brahmamuhurta or Brahma's hour, the final hour of night when the sounding of Vedic mantras brings the new universe, and new day, out of darkness. It identifies this daytime as the Varaha Kalpa, the Daytime of Boar, the first day of the second half of Brahma's life—of his fifty-first year. It also anticipates Earth as a realm to be established by Vedic sacrifice through Hari, the Person of Sacrifice in the shape of Boar, and to be populated by Marichi and other prajapatis, and by Svayambhuva Manu and Shatarupa. Moreover, the panel signifies the highest realms of the brahmanda above the pole star Dhruva; these worlds do not burn up at the end of Brahma's daytime. Finally, the four Kumaras at the top represent disengaged knowledge during Brahma's creation of the brahmanda as a body for himself. This nonprocreative stance (*nivritti*) in the midst of impassioned procreation (*pravritti*) is the subject of the next side of the vimana, which faces north.

The next episode during this predawn period is the story of the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha stealing the Veda from Brahma. The Bhagavan first takes



FIGURE 11.4. Panel W6: Brahma venerates Varaha to begin the Daytime of Boar (prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1990.



FIGURE 11.5. Brahma's western face and damaged southern face (detail, prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1990.

the shape of Hayagriva or Horsehead and retrieves the Veda for Brahma. (Hayagriva appears around the corner in Panel NP1 discussed below.) He then takes the shape of Madhusudana to slay the two asuras (as discussed at Panel 19 in chapter 10).

The Bracketed Panels

Let us turn now to the four panels bracketed and defined by the two corner panels. We shall begin with Panel W2, discuss Panels W3 and W4 as a pair, and conclude with Panel W5.

Panel W2: The Bhagavan on Lokaloka

The Story. Shuka explains cosmography to Parikshit in Book Five of the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 5.16–26). In this teaching, Heaven above and Rasa below belong to Earth as the realms of death and birth. Earth is enclosed by a mountain range that in width is one-fourth of Earth's extent. It divides directional space (*loka*) from nondirectional space (*aloka*) and is therefore known as Lokaloka. A vast expanse of pure water separates this mountain range from the seventh and outermost continent of Earth known as Pushkara or Blue Water Lily. No light of Surya the Sun goes beyond Lokaloka, and four elephants stand on it to stabilize space with the cardinal directions. To protect the world and its inhabitants inside Lokaloka, the Supreme Transcendent Person, the Great Master of Powers, the Inner Controller of the Atman, appears on all its sides in a single material shape of purity holding his weapons in the company of Vishvaksena and others (*BP* 5.20.34–41). Also with him are righteousness (*dharma*), knowledge (*jnana*), renunciation (*vairagya*), sovereignty (*aishvarya*) and others; and the eight great occult powers (*mahasiddhi*) described at Panel 19 in chapter 10.

The Panel. At the bottom of this badly damaged panel sit two male figures (Figure 11.6). The larger, on the viewer's right, is Shuka, who is teaching Parikshit, the figure who sits slightly behind him and is therefore smaller in size. The subject of Shuka's lesson is Lokaloka, where the Bhagavan sits, as illustrated by the scene above.

The central figure in this scene depicts the pure shape of the Bhagavan as he sits on all sides of Lokaloka. An object above his head denotes the central axis running down the middle of the Bhagavan's figure to divide the panel in halves. He sits in the posture of relaxation (*lalitasana*) and has four faces directed toward the cardinal directions, three of which are visible. He also has two pairs of arms. The hands of his back pair hold the wheel and conch, whose remnants are visible; and the wheel may be positioned as a prayogachakra. His front left hand rests in his lap as his front right arm rises up to form a mudra, but the arm is broken off above the elbow. To replicate the meaning of the prayogachakra above it, the missing hand probably formed the abhayamudra of protection: the open hand faces the viewer with thumb and fingers straight up (*PS* 1974: 45).

Six figures accompany the Bhagavan, three on each side. The three on his right are visible: the faces of two are at the level of the Bhagavan's head and crown, and the third stands near his right side. The upper two figures on the left side have been effaced, but the third remains at his left side, standing and forming the anjalimudra. He is probably Vishvaksena. The identity of the others is undetermined.



FIGURE 11.6. Panel W2: The Bhagavan on Lokaloka. IFDI.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the outermost sheath of the brahmanda or universe, the division between directional space and chronological time inside, and nondirectional space and unmeasured time on the outside. The protection of the Bhagavan in a shape made of purity on Lokaloka counters the disintegrative meaning of this panel's dark location at the southwest portion of the mandala. The Bhagavan's four faces repeat the four

faces of the durgapala Narayana sitting in a similar southwest location on the sanctum above (Panel 16). Both depict the Bhagavan's "highest shape of supreme sovereignty," which has a face in every direction (*BG* 11.11). Moreover, the Bhagavan on Lokaloka is the inner controller of Brahma's body and of those it contains; and as Surya the Sun he is their external controller, appearing ahead at the analogous northwest position in Panel W5.

Panel W3: Kalki above Devapi of the Lunar Dynasty

Panel W4: Kalki above Maru of the Solar Dynasty

Two panels with identical depictions of Kalki riding his white horse Devadatta appear above the panels on each side of the porch entrance. Each stands adjacent to a lion pillar placed next to a male dvarapala. We shall discuss these panels as a pair.

THE STORY. Kalki, known also as Shasta or Punisher, is the avatara appearing at the end of the Kali Yuga to defeat the asura Kali, who takes over the rule of Bharata when Krishna leaves his human embodiment at Prabhasa (*BP* 2.7.38; 12.2.17–39).[8] Kali will dominate Bharata for 1,200 deva years, or 432,000 human years. Throughout this time two yogin representatives of the Lunar and Solar dynasties survive in the village of Kalapa: Devapi of the Lunar Dynasty and Maru of the Solar Dynasty. At the end of the age, the Bhagavan will direct them to reestablish the proper dharma of varna or ritual class, jati or caste, and ashrama or stage of life; and will descend as Kalki to protect this dharma of good people (*BP* 12.2.17–24).

Kalki will be born to Vishnuyashas, the renowned Brahmin headman of the village named Shambhala, and he will ride a swift white horse named Devadatta. Possessing eight sovereign powers, he will speed over Bharata destroying hundreds of thousands of evil people who falsely wear the emblems of protectors. After he removes all evil in towns and villages, the fragrance blown from the perfume on his body will purify peoples' minds. Once this material form of purity enters their hearts where consciousness resides, they will beget powerful children, and their progeny will be of a pure nature. The Krita Yuga will then begin, because Moon, Sun, and Jupiter will be in the same house, and the star Pushya will be ascendant.

Until then, however, life on Bharata worsens considerably (*BP* 12.2–11): There is heavy taxation and Shudras, barbarians (*mleccha*), and imposters (*pakhanda*) exercise power harshly. Religious insignia are meaningless, money rules in court, ostentation is considered character, mating is marriage, and bathing is no longer a ceremonial rite. People observe dharma only for show, and greedy and cruel rulers force their subjects to flee to mountains and forests where they fight among themselves. There is hunger, thirst, disease, and worry, and people live at most twenty or thirty years.

As recorded in Book Twelve of the *Bhagavata Purana*, Shuka told the emperor Parikshit about the political figures and events of the Kali Yuga; since they were living at its very beginning he described them in the future tense. I will summarize them here, however, in the past tense, as viewed from the perspective of eighth-century Kanchipuram. Shuka began with the geographical mandala of the Indus and Ganges region. Its east-west axis extended from the Bay of Bengal in the east to the Arabian Sea in the west, and its north-south axis extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south. He began with Magadha in the east, moved to Vidisha in the west, then clockwise to the north; after describing the south he returned to a new age in Magadha in the east. He described an aggressive king in Magadha known as Vishvasphurji (Thundering Everywhere), who appears to be Chandra Gupta II (ca. 376–415 CE). He turned the higher classes (*varna*) into Pulindas, Yadus, and Madrakas (tribes outside the varna system), and wiped out the dominion of those possessing virya. He created a capital at Padmavati (a name for Ujjaini, the capital of ancient Malwa). The realm of his "thunder," Shuka said, extended from the "Door of Ganga" (Gangadvara) at modern Haridvara to that river's junction with the Yamuna at Prayaga (modern Allahahad) (*BP* 12.1.36–37).

Why did Shuka resent the thundering Madagha king who appears to have been Chandra Gupta II? Because, Shuka said, he had wiped out the Vedic-based order of the four classes, which is the order of society Krishna created (*BG* 4.13). More tellingly, he had also wiped out the dominion of those possessing virya. In Bhagavata terms, *virya* means the sovereign ability to act without being affected by the action, a quality that Bhagavata rulers believed emanated from the Pre-eminently Mighty Pradyumna formation. Bhagavatas believed Vasudeva used such rulers as his instrumental slaves. Shuka apparently resented the fact that by conquering the Shakas in Ujjaini, Chandra Gupta II had eliminated minor Bhagavata rulers, had removed their power to enforce the order of four classes within their realms, and had thereby allowed low-status Pulindas, Yadus, and Madrakas to ascend politically and socially.

During that same period, Vratyas and barbarians (*mleccha*) (probably the Hunas who ruled ca. 500–530) took over the northwest. Shuka said those barbarian rulers were unrighteous (*adharma*) and chaotic (*anrita*),[9] and murdered women, children, Brahmins, and cows. They were short-lived weaklings overpowered by passion and delusion; they stole the wives and wealth of others and oppressed their subjects. In turn, their subjects adapted to barbarian behavior and language and fought with each other. Thenceforth conditions only worsened (*BP* 12.2).

By the *Bhagavata Purana's* own calculation, the building of the Emperor's Vishnu-house took place thousands of years after the Dvapara Yuga. Shuka's predictions about the Kali Yuga may therefore be read as a pious Bhagavata's critical view of the age in which he lived in the light of an idealized pre-

vious age. Given the location of this Vishnu-house in the deep south of eighth-century Bharata, it is notable that all the events Shuka described took place earlier in the north, in the paradigmatic Aryavarta (Realm of the Nobles). The Bhagavata Dharma had come from that region to the Tamil speakers, perhaps as early as the third century BCE (Hudson: 1993d and 1994); for Bhagavatas it was the realm of the idealized Dvapara Yuga of Krishna's lifetime. Bhagavatas attributed any aspect of "noble" culture in the north that by then did not match the ideal society of the Pandavas to the disintegrating power of Time (*BP* 12.2.1).

Shuka's description suggests that such had been the political reality in part of Bharata for centuries if not millennia. Yet, as we shall see, the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 11.5.38–40) also tells us that an agamic religious renaissance in the Dravidian regions of the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyans, Cheras, and others had long been under way by the time the Vishnu-house was built about 770. Compared to the piety expressed by Dravida poets and temple builders, the distant kingdoms north of the Vindhyas, along the western sea, in the Indus Valley, in Afghanistan, in Kashmir, and along the Yamuna and Ganga rivers appeared to have been hit especially hard by Time's degenerating power. Nevertheless, that same Bhagavata piety viewed the expanding Dravida civilizations in which it was flourishing as imperfect, too. When Shuka described the Kali Yuga, he said that Goddess Earth laughed at the kings who thought they would live long and gain control of her step by step. She criticized, it appears, the efforts of Pallavas and Pandyas and others from the early centuries CE to expand into Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Kings in the Kali Yuga first seek to master their five senses and the mind, and then they try to win over neighboring kings through diplomacy. That allows them to gain control of the whole land up to the sea. Some even cross the sea to conquer other lands. They all fight with one another and end up dying, all for the sake of claiming land. Yet all the great kings of the past, both human and asura, who thought they could possess Earth have died and are reduced to names in legends (*BP* 12.3.3–13).

Shuka concluded his history lesson by telling Parikshit that those stories of glorious and famous men in the world are merely words meant to teach insight into the transient nature of life and detachment from it. Hope lies not in those legends, he said, but in the story of the Uttamashloka, because that story generates devotion to Krishna (*BP* 12.3.14–15).[10] Devotion to Krishna, of course, had been expressed in Tamil poems of the Sangam period (first to fourth centuries CE), and in the *Chilappatikaram* (ca. fifth century) and the *Manimekalai* (ca. sixth century). During the agamic renaissance in the south where this Vishnu-house was built, it was also producing the poems of the Alvars.

Shuka went on to explain that in the Kali Yuga, Dharma is three-fourths gone (*BP* 12.3.24–40). Only a quarter of truth (*satya*), compassion (*daya*), asceticism (*tapas*), and giving (*dana*) exist, and eventually they, too, will be

overwhelmed completely by adharma. Shudras, fishermen, and others of low status are held in esteem, and delusion (*tamas*) dominates over passion (*rajas*) and purity (*sattva*). Imposters (*pakhanda*) condemn Veda, kings "consume" people, and the twice-born (Brahmins) live only to enjoy sex and fill their bellies. Students of Veda (*brahmacharin*) give up their rules, householders beg, forest dwellers live in villages, and renunciants (*sannyasin*) are greedy for money. Shudras dress as ascetics and accept gifts. Moreover, those who sit on the seats of respected teachers to teach Dharma know only Adharma.

That pious Bhagavata judgment no doubt applied to Kanchipuram, Madurai, and other southern towns and cities of the time, as it certainly did to portions of the north, at least in Shuka's mind. What a modern point of view may see as the pluralistic flourishing of many religious and ethnic groups, and as the proper sharing of political power between a variety of castes, high-status and low, pious Bhagavatas saw as degeneration symptomatic of demonic rule. Yet they did not call for social revolution. Instead, they called for accommodation to Time's degenerating course until the coming of Kalki. Let us consider two examples.

The first has to do with marriage. The common Dravida practice of arranging cross-cousin marriages disturbed Shuka, because it enhances the role of the mother's brother and of her lineage in the family, and diminishes the dominant authority of the father's lineage characteristic of the Vedic ideal. As Shuka said, "In the Kali Yuga, a man abandons his own father, brothers, relatives, and friends and aligns with his wife and her family" (*BP* 12.3.37). But he did not say that the practice should be prohibited, only that it is a symptom of Kali Yuga degeneration. Devotees can counteract it by taking refuge in Krishna, which is the implication of the "supreme verse" (*uttamashloka*) of the *Bhagavad-gita* (18.66): "Give up all dharmas and take refuge in me alone and I will free you from all sins, have no care." One does not need to abandon a customary practice even if it contradicts the Veda. Instead, one may live with it; and to be saved from the inevitable sin of it, relying not on customs that are correct according to Veda (*dharmas*) but rather on Vasudeva Krishna's loving and gracious protection of those who cling to him from the stain of sin.

As the second example, Shuka mentioned the imposters (*pakhanda*) who turn the minds of people away from the Immoveable (Achyuta), who then do not worship him and become polluted. In the Pallava domain, they were the Buddhists, Jainas, Ajivikas, Kapalikas, Kalamukhas, and Aghoras whose origin, as we discussed in chapter 10, is represented by Prithu's horse sacrifice at the southwest corner of disorder (*nirriti*) on the middle-floor sanctum (Figure 10.2). Even though imposters teach Adharma as if it were Dharma, Shuka did not urge social revolt against them; he urged personal devotion to Krishna instead. Krishna is the Supreme Person abiding in the minds of people and therefore can destroy the evil that Kali creates through substance, place, and mind (*BP* 12.3.43–45).

If, Shuka continued, the Bhagavan abiding in the center of consciousness (*hritstha*) is heard about (*shruta*), sung about (*sankirtita*), visualized (*dhyata*), and worshiped (*pujita*), or even just respected (*adrita*), he will remove pollution (*ashubha*) from all births. Nothing can achieve such purity (*shuddhi*) except the Bhagavan residing in the center of consciousness (*hridistha*)—not learning, not asceticism, not breath control, not friendliness to all, not bathing in holy places, not vows, not giving, and not the repetition of mantras (*BP* 12.3.46–48). Furthermore, the purification of consciousness is easy, because the devotee receives the aid of others through the communal worship called kirtana. "The age of Kali is full of evil, yet it has one good quality. Just by singing of the Bhagavan's glories (*kirtana*) one will join the assembly of the freed (*mukta-sanga*) that belongs to Krishna. Whatever is attained in the Krita Yuga by visualizing Vishnu, whatever is attained in the Treta Yuga by sacrificial rites, whatever is attained in the Dvapara Yuga by rituals of worshipful service, is attained in the Kali Yuga just by singing his glories" (*BP* 12.3.51–52).

Singing Krishna's glories is what the Alvar poets did. They did so with such skilled and learned devotion that later acharyas in Kanchipuram and Sri Rangam recognized their collected "Four Thousand Divine Stanzas" to be the "Tamil Veda" (Carman and Narayanana 1989; Narayanan 1994).

Now that we have been introduced to the Kali Yuga—from which viewers entering the temple have symbolically just emerged—let us turn to the two panels (W3 and W4) depicting the cause of it all, Time. They depict the Inner Controller at the southwest and the External Controller at the northwest.

THE PANELS. These two panels resemble each other closely (Figures 11.7, 11.8). At the top of each sits Kalki astride his horse Devadatta facing northward, perhaps to direct the worshiper in the clockwise direction of circumambulation. Kalki holds the reins with his right hand, and with his left hand raises a sword high above and behind his head. Below Kalki stand large and similar depictions of the two kings who will renew the two Kshatriya dynasties in the forthcoming Krita Yuga: Devapi of the Lunar Dynasty to the south and Maru of the Solar Dynasty to the north. Both have one pair of arms, are crowned, and are dressed royally. But there are variations.

Devapi on the lunar south (to the viewer's right, Figure 11.7) appears to form the grahamudra, "mudra of the eclipse": his left hand is near or supports his right elbow, and his right hand faces its palm forward with thumb open and fingers bent toward the palm (*PS* 1974: 97). A damaged depiction of a large unidentified person stands to Devapi's left; a smaller person stands to his right, partly hidden by the lion, and may signify worship of the moon.

On the solar north (to the viewer's left, Figure 11.8), Maru appears to have a halo behind his head, which suggests the sun. His right hand at his stomach forms what appears to be the tattvamudra: the thumb and index finger are touching and three fingers are extended (*PS* 1974: 72). His left shoulder and



FIGURE 11.7. Panel W3: Kalki above Devapi of the Lunar Dynasty (prior to repair). IFDI.

arm are set back into the niche, and his left hand holds an unidentified object at his chest. An unidentified crowned person, with right arm and hand hidden in the niche, stands to his right, looks to the southwest, and raises his left hand with fingers open at the side of his chest. A much smaller figure without a crown and only a garment around his waist stands to Maru's left. He is not in a niche and reaches from Maru's knees to his chest. His feet are spread apart facing south, and a rope encircles his ankles, or perhaps two large anklets appear as merged. He bends forward at the hips, arches his back toward the north, twists his chest westward, stretches his two arms above his head, and



FIGURE 11.8. Panel W4: Kalki above Maru of the Solar Dynasty (prior to repair). IFDI.

joins his fingers to form a circle through which he gazes. He depicts Yajnavalkya using the Gayatri mantra to worship Surya the Sun. After this, Hari appears to him in the shape of a horse with a mane (*vajirupa*) and teaches him previously unknown Yajus mantras (*BP* 12.6.66–74).

THE PANELS' MEANINGS. Both panels represent the region of Bharata on the Jambu continent, and Kalki astride Devadatta identifies this western side with the Kali Yuga on Bharata. But the large figures below point to its eventual end. The lunar Devapi south of the entrance and the solar Maru north of the entrance define the porch face as the middle of the night, with its beginning on

the south and its ending on the north. This meaning corresponds to the midnight meaning of the porch above on the middle-floor sanctum. In both depictions Kalki faces northward, the direction of circumambulation (*pradakshina*), as if to indicate that the program of this ardhamandapa and vimana is a continuous clockwise sequence beginning on this western side. Finally, the appearance of the Bhagavan to Yajnavalkya in the shape of a horse to reveal Vedic mantras refers to the two-part account of Hayagriva and Madhusudana discusssed above, and to Hayagriva worshiped in the Bhadrashva region of Jambu discussed below.

Panel W5: Surya the Sun Flies over the Continent of Plaksha

The Story. The continent of Jambu exists at the center of Earth and the ocean of salt surrounds it. Around this salt ocean is the second of Earth's seven continents. Just as Jambu receives its name from the roseapple (*jambu*) tree standing on it, this continent receives the name Plaksha from its waved-leaf fig tree (*plaksha*). The Bhagavan dwells there in the shape of a fire with seven tongues of flame (*BP* 5.20.1–6; 20). This continent contains seven mountains and seven rivers, and Priyavrata's second son, Idhmajihva, divided it into seven regions to be ruled by his seven sons. River water purifies its inhabitants, who are divided into the four ritual classes, live one thousand years, and resemble devas. Idhmajihva and his sons and their subjects worship Vishnu in the shape of Surya the Sun, who is the basis of all that exists, the basis of life and death, and the Ruler of Sight.

According to the theology of the formations, Surya manifests Vishnu, and Vishnu manifests the Vasudeva formation dwelling as Self or Atman in all bodies (*BP* 12.11.27–50). Vishnu and Surya are modes of Vasudeva. Vishnu as Surya originated all Vedic rites by means of Yajnavalkya, and assumed the form of chronological time (*kalarupa*) in order to control the world (*lokatantra*). Throughout each kalpa, he revolves around the universe in the company of twelve sets of attendants, completing one circuit in twelve months.

Circumambulation pradakshina (clockwise) imitates Surya's revolution. Gazing at this panel, visitors face east and see Sun as those in Plaksha worship him. The sculpted figure moves toward the west in a slightly northward orientation that suggests the sun's northward journey (*uttarayana*) after the winter solstice; it begins the half year thought to be the daytime of the devas. Yet the panel does not represent sunrise on Bharata, but rather on Plaksha further to the east; sunrise there is experienced here as late night. The panel thus represents the dark period of our night (2–4 a.m.), prior to the glow in the east during the predawn "hour of Brahma" (4–6 a.m.).

The scene also alludes to the Gayatri mantra, which is to be recited in the morning as Surya rises. The sun-worshiping figure in the previous Kalki and

Maru panel, who is probably Yajnavalka, points to it. Yajnavalka's prayer to Sun was the origin of all Vedic rites and itself a commentary on the meaning of the Gayatri (*BP* 12.6.66–72). In response, the Bhagavan appeared to him as a horse and taught him Yajus mantras; until then they were unknown to anyone. Yajnavalkya divided them into fifteen recensions known as the Vajasanis ("derived from the mane of the horse" or "obtained from the speedy one"). That story anticipates the depiction of Hayagriva (Horsehead) in the next panel around the corner (Panel NP1).

Inhabitants of the other continents on earth also worship the Bhagavan in specific forms. On Shalmala, the continent that immediately surrounds Plaksha, Veda is used to worship the Self as Soma the Moon made of Veda (*BP* 5.20.7–12). Moon, the indestructible place of the sacrifice (*yajna*) once placed there by devas, became the ancestral progenitor of the three fires of the Vedic sacrifice. Moon descended from Brahma through Atri (*BP* 9.14.1–14); and the threefold fire, Jatavedas, descended from Moon through Budha and Pururava (*BP* 9.14.15–49). Moon appears with Daksha and Dattatreya on the south-facing corner of the vimana (Panel SP1).

On the next three continents after Shalmala, beings worship him in forms that are not represented on the Vishnu-house: on Kusha as the threefold Vedic fire (Jatavedas); on Krauncha as water (Apah); and on Saka as air (Vayu). On the seventh continent, Pushkara, they worship him as Brahma with the lotus of thousands of shining petals as depicted at the east-facing northeast corner (Panel E1). Finally, we come to the boundary between directional and nondirectional space, the Lokaloka mountain range depicted at the other corner of the porch, as already discussed.

THE PANEL. The damaged panel is divided diagonally (Figure 11.9). Surya with two pairs of arms fills the upper portion to the south. His left leg extending down the south side touches the bottom of his foot to the panel's frame, and his right knee pulls up in the act of flying (a posture repeated by flying figures on other panels). Surya faces slightly northward and his tall crown slants slightly south. Damaged plaster obscures the details of his dress and of the space above him. His back pair of hands hold the wheel and conch. His front left hand at the level of his breast bends its fingers inward with the forefinger slightly elevated to suggest the dipamudra of light (*PS* 1974: 96). His open right hand bends down in the varadamudra of giving (*PS* 1974: 45).

The eight males balancing the four-armed flying figure of Sun are Idhmajihva and his seven sons, who rule the continent. Idhmajihva is probably the bottom figure gesturing toward Surya. He divided the Plaksha continent into seven realms for his seven sons and then took to the contemplative life. All eight males worship Sun, "Ruler of Sight" (Drigishvara), the visible external mode of the Bhagavan's activity as controller of all things (*BP* 5.20.5; 5.20.46).



FIGURE 11.9. Panel W5: Surya the Sun flies over the continent of Plaksha. Source unidentified.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the continent of Plaksha, the circular continent adjacent to Jambu with Mount Meru at its center. This is the first of six that extend outward from the center and are enclosed by Lokaloka, which is represented at the analogous southwestern position at Panel W2. It also represents the penultimate hour of night on Bharata, when Surya passes over Plaksha toward Jambu on his way to bring Bharata the last of night. Viewers face east to see Surya being worshiped in Plaksha before he reaches Jambu. It reveals that circumambulation imitates the pradakshina direction of Surya's clockwise revolution, keeping Mount Meru to his right. Furthermore,

it depicts Vasudeva, who dwells in all bodies as the atman, and who is the root of Veda and its ceremonies, in the shape of Time (Kalarupa) controlling the world through the year's twelve months (*BP* 12.11.29–33). Surya the external controller depicted here in Panel W5 forms a complementary pair with the depiction in Panel W2 of the inner controller dwelling on Lokaloka.

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12

The Panels on the Ardhamandapa or Porch

The northern and southern sides of the ardhamandapa or porch have the same arrangement.[1] The corner panel is visually set apart from the other two. At the center of the wall is a window flanked on each side by a tall covered structure housing a graceful male guard (depicted at Panel NP3). The windows have been closed up to allow for later shrines to be built inside. At the bottom of the sealed window on the southern side emerges a drainage channel to carry the flow from the unction rites conducted in the shrine of the Goddess Sri Lakshmi, known in Tamil as Tayar, the Venerable Mother. Her east-facing black stone icon stands in a sanctum built inside the porch adjacent to this south wall. As a later addition, it would have required the closing of the window. Framed by tall pillars with a roofed top, these blank panels share the visual status of the central figures in the two panels on either side.

A sculpted set of three standing male figures is on each side of the guarded window. The central figure defines the identity of the set and is the focus of attention of the other two. The meanings of these panels have to do with the Vedas and its rituals, with the direction the panels face on the Vishnu-house mandala, and with the time of night in which they appear. The three panels facing southward (placed between Panels W1 and W2) are in the position of early nighttime. The first two panels represent curses made at a sacrifice, an interrupted sacrifice that leads to disaster, and one that leads to blessings. The third panel represents a curse that leads to purification through constant opposition to God. The three panels facing north (placed between Panels W4 and W5) are in the position of late

nighttime moving toward the predawn hour of Brahma or brahmamuhurta. The first panel represents preservation of the Vedas for Brahma's new daytime kalpa. The second two panels represent the affirmation of radical ascetic practices as consistent with the Vedas even as they violate Vedic limitations.

The Panels on the Porch Facing South

These panels are discussed in the clockwise direction, beginning at the corner where the porch and vimana join.

Panel SP1: Hari Flanked by Rudra and Daksha

The Story. This panel represents the long set of stories that begins with Daksha (Skill in Sacrifice) during the first Manu Term ruled by Svaymbhuva Manu with his wife Satarupa (*BP* 4.1–7). According to the Daksha story, Daksha was a householder son of Brahma, a lord of progeny (*prajapati*).[2] His sixteenth daughter was named Sati (True Wife). He married her to Rudra Shiva.

Once, when the lords of progeny were conducting a great thousand-year sacrifice (*sattra*) to Vasudeva, Daksha entered the sacrificial hall. Everyone automatically arose to greet him except his father, Brahma, and his son-in-law, Rudra Shiva. Daksha greeted his father, but was furious at his son-in-law, who showed not the slightest gesture of polite recognition. In his rage he regretted having given his daughter to someone who was not auspicious (*shiva*) but inauspicous (*ashiva*), because he danced naked in cremation grounds with demons and wore the ashes of cremated bodies and the bones of the dead (*BP* 4.2.13–16). Supported by the Brahmins present, Daksha pronounced a curse on Rudra Shiva: "May this most depraved of devas cease to receive any portion of the sacrifice." Daksha then left the sacrificial arena. Rudra's servant Nandishvara (Ruler of the Happy) countered with a curse on Daksha and the Brahmins who supported him: They shall become ignorant performers of rites, lost in beastly pleasure, and Daksha shall have the head of a goat (*BP* 4.2.20–26). The Brahmin seer Bhrigu then countered this curse with a third: Those who follow Rudra by receiving the Shivadiksha and following the Bhavavrata shall be impostor (*pakhanda*) worshipers not of Rudra but of the leader of his bhutas or ghosts (*BP* 4.2.28–31). Shiva and his followers left the sacrificial arena in a grim mood. But the lords of progeny completed the sattra by taking its final bath at the place where the Ganga joins the Yamuna and went home satisfied.

Father-in-law and son-in-law were antagonistic for many years (*BP* 4.3). Brahma had appointed Daksha leader of the lords of progeny, and he grew proud. His conflict with Rudra Shiva came to a head at sacrificial rites during the rule of King Prachinabarhi (*BP* 4.5.8). Daksha had patronized the Vajapeya sacrifice and now began the prestigious Brihaspatisava sacrifice. He invited all

devas and their wives to it except Rudra Shiva and Sati. Only when Sati saw devas and their elegantly dressed wives traveling to her father's place did she learn of the event. Though not invited, she nevertheless asked her husband to take her to it so that she could see her sisters and enjoy the festivities. "After all," she asked, "am I not half your body?"

But Shiva said that because her father had insulted them, they should not go: "When a holy person (*sadhu*) shows respect to another he venerates the Supreme Person with the mind and not the person who identifies himself with the body. The pure sattva in each person is called Vasudeva, for in it the Person (*puman*) reveals himself. Mentally, I always venerate the Bhagavan Vasudeva in that sattva. I did not venerate your father who ignorantly identifies himself with his body. He insulted me needlessly and I will not go, and it will not be wise for you to go without me. Insult from family leads to the death of those of good repute" (*BP* 4.3.23–25). Shiva's refusal to rise to greet his father-in-law had been his critique of Daksha's inordinate pride.

Torn between her husband and her paternal family, grieved and angered, Sati left for her father's place without her husband (*BP* 4.4). But Shiva's attendants followed her, placed her on a bull to carry her, and escorted her in a grand procession to the place of sacrifice. When she arrived, her mother and sisters greeted her, but not her father. When the Goddess learned that her father had designated no portion of the offerings for her husband, her anger blazed. In the very midst of the assembly, Sati (True Wife) told her father that she would now abandon the body born of him: "I am ashamed of my relationship to you. You slander him who is auspicious (*shiva*) but looks inauspicious (*ashiva*), and whose dark-blue throat (stained by the kalakuta poison) reveals his compassion toward the world."

Wearing a yellow garment and taking a sip of water as purification, Sati sat down facing north and entered the Path of Yoga (*yogapatha*). Sati began a rite that illustrates the Yoga teaching of the previous panel of the Unbounded. Steady in her posture (*asana*), she equalized the breaths prana and apana in the chakra at her navel. Then she raised the breath udana from there to the chakra at her heart (*hridi*), steadied it with her intellect (*buddhi*), and then raised it to the chakra at her throat. From there she brought it to the chakra between her eyebrows. Now, motivated by anger at her father, she sustained her attention (*dharana*) on the fire and wind in her body. She focused on her husband's feet until she perceived nothing else. When all her impurities finally dissolved, the intensity of her samadhi set her body on fire (*BP* 4.4.25–27, following Tagare 1976–1979 2: 443).

The assembled onlookers were horrified that Daksha had allowed his daughter to burn herself alive. Sati's attendants rose up to slay Daksha, but Bhrigu, the adhvaryu priest, poured oblations into the southern fire and devas called Ribhus appeared. The Ribhus drove Sati's party away with burning torches.

At Kailasa, the seer Narada told Rudra Shiva what had happened. Biting his lip in anger, Shiva plucked out a lock of his matted hair, stood up, and threw it to the ground (*BP* 4.5). Out of that appeared the embodiment of his anger known as Virabhadra (Distinguished Hero). In Tapasyananda's translation (1980–1982 2: 321): "His head touched the skies; his body was black like a rain-cloud; he had a thousand arms; his three eyes resembled three suns; he had fierce-looking fangs; his hair was flaming like fire; and he wore a garland of skulls" (*BP* 4.5.3). Shiva sent Virabhadra to destroy Daksha's sacrifice, and he and his troops hit like a storm, scattering the guests everywhere. Virabhadra tied up Daksha, stood on his chest, and tried to cut off his head with a sword, but surprisingly could not even break his skin. Thinking it over, he decided to treat Daksha as the victim for the sacrifice and suffocated him in the Vedic manner. He was now able to cut off Daksha's head, which he offered into the southern fire. Finally, Virabhadra set the entire sacrificial arena ablaze and returned to Kailasa.

The devas sought help from Brahma. Since they knew in advance what would happen at a sacrifice that excluded Shiva, Brahma and Narayana had not attended it (*BP* 4.6). Brahma advised the devas to seek Shiva's pardon for excluding him from the sacrifice and led them to Mount Kailasa. They found Shiva sitting on darbha grass under a banyan tree, no doubt facing south as a mode of Dakshinamurti (the South-Facing Material Form); he was quietly teaching Narada about the eternal *brahman*. The guru Shiva wore ashes and a deer hide, possessed a staff (*danda*), had matted hair, and bore the crescent moon on his forehead. Maitreya described his posture carefully: "Having placed the lotus of his [left] foot on the ground toward the right, and his [left] elbow on his knee, with the garland of beads on its forearm, he sat holding the gesture of teaching [with his right hand]. He, the Lord of the Mountain, sat in the enstasy of extinction in *brahman* without recourse to the belt for yoga" (*BP* 4.6.38–39a).[3]

When Shiva saw Brahma approaching, he and all the others arose and prostrated before him. In response, Brahma praised Shiva as the *brahman* who is the Ruler of Shakti and Shiva, as the womb and seed of the moving universe, as the Bhagavan who, through Shiva and Shakti, plays at the emanation, preservation, and dissolution of everything, and as the ordainer of sacrifice through Daksha. (Brahma's identification of Shiva with Vasudeva suggests that Brahma, knowing that Shiva's consciousness was "extinguished in *brahman*," addressed *brahman* as at that moment embodied in him.) Brahma then asked Shiva as one whom maya does not infatuate to be compassionate toward those whom she does. "Please complete the sacrifice that Daksha began," he said, "and make all the participants whole again."

Agreeing to Brahma's request, Shiva went with everyone to the sacrificial arena, where he had everything restored (*BP* 4.7). To revive Daksha, whose head had been burned up in the southern fire, they took the head of the sacrificial goat and connected it to his body, and with a glance, Shiva brought

him to life. Daksha's first sight through his goat eyes was Shiva, and the vision clarified his mind. Feelings for his dead daughter swamped Daksha as he praised Shiva, and now understood that in order to keep him and other Brahmins disciplined and out of purgatory, Shiva had chastised him as a cowherd prods cattle with a stick. Brahmins, after all, had originated from Shiva's own face (*BP* 4.7.14).

Shiva told Daksha to complete the sacrifice. He did so with a purifying oblation to Vishnu. Bhrigu, the adhvaryu priest, held the oblation in his hand and Daksha, its goat-headed patron, envisioned Vasudeva in his mind. Hari immediately appeared on Garuda. He had eight hands holding his emblems (conch, discus, mace, lotus, bow, arrow, sword, and shield), and a white umbrella glowed above him like the moon. The devas prostrated before him and, beginning with Daksha, each praised him who had graciously accepted the offerings. He was, they said, "the Person who at the end of the last kalpa ate the worlds and lay on Shesha in the waters, the Person whom siddhas strive to see at the center of consciousness (*hridi*)" (*BP* 4.7.42). The Brahmins said he was the sacrifice, the sacrificer, and the sacrificed together. The vidyadharas said he was the embodiment of sacrifice whose body is Veda, who once became Boar and playfully raised Goddess Earth up from watery realm of Taste (Rasatala) on his tusk (as illustrated in Panel S5).

In response to their praise, Vasudeva identified himself as the supreme cause of the universe who assumes different names for the emanation, preservation, and destruction of everything through maya. Only through ignorance is he, who is One, seen as dual, as Brahma and Shiva. But he who sees the Three (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) as One attains peace (a point made visually by the first south-facing panel on the vimana, S1). After Daksha and the others completed the sacrifice, everyone returned home.

Daksha's daughter Sati is reborn through the apsaras Mena and the mountain Himavan (He Possesses Snow) as Parvati (The Mountain's Daughter). Again she marries Bhava Rudra (*BP* 4.7.58–59). Daksha is reborn through the ten sons of King Prachinabarhis (Eastern Light), who are known as Prachetas (The Attentive) (*BP* 4.30–31; 6.4–6). At the dawn of the sixth Manu Term, Hari gives Asikni to Daksha as wife and ordains propagation according to the "order of sexual union by couples" (which matches Daksha's identification with a goat in his previous birth). Daksha and Asikni have sixty daughters. Seventeen are married to Kashyapa, and of them two are Aditi and Diti. Kashyapa and Aditi give birth to devas; and most notable among them is Vamana the Dwarf, the subject of Panel SP2 ahead. Kashyapa and Diti give birth to asuras; and most notable among them are Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha, who are introduced by Panel SP3.

The story provides a Bhagavata view of two other religions that claimed the authority of Veda. One followed the rites of Veda scrupulously, but misunderstood them. The other followed rites so distorted that they were deceived

imposters or heretics (*pakhanda/pasanda*). The leaders of the first religion were Brahmin ritualists, probably Mimamsakas, who did not recognize the authority of the esoteric interpretation of Veda taught in the Upanishads. From the Bhagavata point of view, they did not understand *brahman* truly and thought Veda referred only to itself and only produced life in heaven. They were seen as self-interested ritual specialists out for gain who had no sense of the transcendent dimension of the rites to which they were devoted.

The leaders of the other religion observed the vow of Bhava (*Bhavavrata*), and Bhagavatas saw them as polluted and stupid because they wore matted hair, ashes, and bones, and drank liquor in a sadhana that followed from Shivadiksha. The deity they worshiped and called Shiva, Bhagavatas said, was



FIGURE 12.1. Panel SP1: Hari flanked by Rudra and Daksha (prior to repair). IFDI.

not really Shiva, but was a deva of bhutas who posed as Shiva. The true Shiva was a devotee of the Bhagavan and was worshiped according to the Agama of Shaiva Siddhanta. When this temple was built, that Shaiva Siddhanta Agama governed the imperial Rajasimheshvara temple on the west side of Kanchipuram.

Even devotees of the Shaiva Agama in eighth-century Kanchipuram may have regarded those who followed the Vow of Bhava as imposters.[4] From their point of view, they followed sadhanas believed to have been revealed by the fierce Bhairava face on the Linga of Five Faces (Panchamukhalinga). Not surprisingly, that fierce Bhairava faces south.

THE PANEL. This badly damaged panel portrays Hari standing on raised platform, crowned and dressed royally (Figure 12.1). Five of what must have been eight arms are visible. His back right hand holds the wheel at the level of his head as if he is about to throw it as a weapon. The conch on the left appears higher, at the level of his crown. Of his next pair of arms, only the right arm bending upward is visible. The third pair is visible at his middle; he holds his right hand at his side and his left hand at his center, perhaps forming a mudra. His fourth pair of arms is evident only by his left arm and his hand resting on his hip.

Daksha, with only one pair of arms and dressed as a householder, stands on a lower level to Hari's right, is turned slightly southward toward him, and forms the anjalimudra at his lower chest. His head reveals his identity as Daksha: Close inspection reveals that his "crown" is the horns of a goat, and that his right ear hangs down like a goat's ear. Rudra with one pair of arms stands to the left of Hari on the same level as Daksha. The badly damaged figure appears to be dressed as an ascetic with a sacred thread hanging from his right shoulder and passing under his left arm. His identity as Rudra is evident from the matted hair, which stands out at the sides of his head.

Panel SP2: Dwarf Crowned as Upendra with Bali and Indra

THE STORY. This panel continues the story of Daksha (reborn as the son of the Prachetas) and his wife Akshini, represented by the previous Panel SP1. Through Daksha's daughter Aditi and her husband Kashyapa, the Bhagavan takes birth as Vamana the Dwarf; this panel represents the conclusion of his story (told at Panels 14 and 15 in chapter 9).

The scene is Bali's sacrificial arena at Bhrigu's Shore on the Narmada River and the time is the seventh Manu Term, in which we are living (*BP* 8.13.1–6; 8.23.18–31). At Vamana's request Bali's acharya, Shukra, completes Bali's horse sacrifice and Vamana then gives Heaven back to Indra. Brahma, together with other exalted beings, now proclaims Vamana master of the worlds and of the world protectors, who is to be known as Upendra, "Indra's

Younger Brother," the protector of all devas and all Vedas, of dharma, fame, and wealth, of auspicious vows and ceremonies, and of Heaven. Indra then leads Upendra in the devas' vehicle to Heaven and everyone else returns to their respective abodes. Great Indra is now ruling in Heaven, but under the protection of his tiny younger brother. If this story is told at ceremonies or formal acts of intent, whether for devas, ancestors, or people, they shall be completed and all defects shall be removed.

The Panel. Vamana as Upendra stands stiffly in the center of this set of panels, dressed royally with a tall and straight crown (Figure 12.2). He appears to have two pairs of arms, for what may be the remains of a conch appears above his left shoulder. He rests his left hand on his hip, and holds his right hand at his shoulder, but the mudra is obliterated.

The figure in the honored position to Upendra's right provides the clue to interpreting this set. His large crowned head and his bulkiness, which fills the allotted space, identifies him as the great asura king Bali, who now dwells in Sutala beneath Earth in the dark waters of Rasa. His right arm is destroyed. The mudra of his right hand at the side of his torso is also destroyed. The crowned figure in the subordinate position to Upendra's left is his older brother Indra, who now dwells in bright Heaven above Earth. As do the other two, he faces southward, but turns his head slightly westward toward his younger brother in the central position of honor. This panel points ahead to the next Manu Term, the eighth, for then Bali will become Indra and from there will attain the ultimate goal of Vaikuntha (*BP* 3.13.12–13).

The Panel's Meanings. Dwarf was born from Aditi in the month of Shravana just after sunset, which matches the place of this second panel after the southwest corner of the vimana, where sunset is located. Shravana (Avani in Tamil) is the month that corresponds to the early nighttime after sunset and belongs to the Bhagavan's murti form named Bearer of Kingship (Shridhara). That title denotes Dwarf when he approached Bali at the horse sacrifice. As discussed in chapter 9, the Shridhara murti completes a chronological sequence that began with the early afternoon and is illustrated by the murtis of the southern side of the Vishnu-house: Vishnu (Pervading Actor), Madhusudana (Slayer of Deluded Passion), Trivikrama (Thrice-Strider), Vamana (Dwarf), and Shridhara (Bearer of Kingship). All those murti titles appear in the story of Dwarf and Bali.

With this panel the Kali Yuga is under way. Krishna told Uddhava in the doctrine of *Brahman* that in the Kali Yuga, adherence to true being (*satya*) is the highest value. The asura king, Bali, illustrates that value and its results. Being consistently true in the Kali Yuga may lead to the loss of wealth and status, and even of life itself, but bestows wisdom and elicits a response from Vasudeva that is more gracious than one can imagine.



FIGURE 12.2. Panel SP2: Dwarf crowned as Upendra with Bali and Indra (prior to repair). IFDI.

Even before performing the rites of taking refuge, being true will elicit gracious love, which in turn will transform perception. In order for an asura (or Shudra), who by definition "is not true" (*asatya*), to "be true" (*satya*), he offers his head to Vasudeva's foot. Ironically, by definition Vasudeva "is true," yet his act as the deceptive Dwarf "is not true." Giving his head was the only way the

asura king could keep his word, "I give you three steps," but as he quickly learned, in truth he did nothing, for he did not own anything that he could give to the owner of everything. All that mattered was his intent (*sankalpa*).

Dwarf's "footprint" signifies that truth, and after the acharya applied it as the white and red pundra design to his or her forehead, the consecrated Bhagavata applied it there every morning (Smith 1980: 60). It was the Bhagavan's "name" (*nama*) stamped on the forehead as the sign that the devotee was now Vasudeva's property. All he or she could do thereafter is "be true." But in the Kali Yuga, "being true" requires considerable insight. In its darkness, God is deceptive and tricky, always asking more than one expects. Although spacetime is his body, he appears within it as a man; although he is the God of gods, he appears as a dwarf; although he is orthoprax, he behaves heretically. He may ask for one small thing, but then takes away everything, only to give it all back with insight as interest.

We may now read the panel in reference to Nandivarman's Bhagavata status when he built the temple. From the inscription on the prakara wall we know that when Pallavamalla was about twelve (ca. 731–732), he had been consecrated the Indra of People (Narendra) with the name Nandivarman. Indra in this panel represents that status. Later (ca. 745–746), he was consecrated a Bhagavata refugee by his acharya and received the title Venerable Slave of the Bhagavan (Perumanatikal). He then won victories that made him emperor. Bali in the panel represents that status.

We may also read the panel as depicting two views of Nandivarman as emperor. Indra represents Pallava perception of him as the consecrated ruler, while Bali represents his perception of himself. According to Bhagavata theology, Nandivarman would have seen himself as an innately "unclean" Shudra living in darkness, who was nevertheless purified, enslaved, and protected by Vasudeva by means of his acharya, whom Upendra in the middle represents.

Significantly, Bali the son of Virochana now rules like an Indra in the underworld Sutala, but is destined to become the Indra of the next manvantara, the eighth. From there he will attain the ultimate goal (*siddhi*) (*BP* 3.13.12–13). Did Bhagavatas believe that story represented Nandivarman's destiny too? The final stanza of Kalikanri's poem about the temple suggests they did: "The Pallavas' Sovereign of ancient fame / Lives long in the land, / The Emperor who built the Vishnu-house / Well described by Kalikanri, / Ruler of Mangai's people and her / Vast fields of abundant paddy, // In this rich and beautiful garland / Of Tamil purity whose skillful singers / (By the grace of our Great Goddess Shri) / Shall rule with brilliance in that shining World / Of abundant water surrounded by the Ocean / Which thunders like the roaring chariots / Of the kings who rule this world" (*PT* 6.9.10). The stanza suggests that Nandivarman will be reborn "in that world," which appears to be the White Island of Vaikuntha in the Ocean of Milk. He will dwell there in a body resembling the

Lord of Vaikuntha, and ultimately will go beyond Brahma's body to the Vaikuntha realm outside of space and time.

Panel SP3: Vaikuntha Appears to the Kumaras at the Cursing of Jaya and Vijaya

The Story. Brahma's four Kumara sons, who are his eldest and completely free of any attachment, freely wander wherever they wish. They are named Sanaka (Ancient), Sanandana (Joyful), Sanatana (Eternal), and Sanatkumara (Ever Young). One time they go by means of their yogamaya to Vaikuntha's abode known as Vaikuntham (*BP* 3.15–16). This transcendent realm of purity is a glorious city surrounded by seven concentric walls, with Vaikuntha's palace at its center. All its residents have the same material form as their Lord. The Kumaras quickly pass through the city's first six gates. At the seventh they find two handsome males of the same age, with four arms, blue skin, massive wildflower garlands, and maces. But these gatekeepers, Jaya (Victory) and Vijaya (Conquest), appear to be angry. The four Kumara brothers, who are naked and look like five-year-old boys, customarily travel everywhere unrestricted and do not think to ask the gatekeepers' permission when they begin to walk through this seventh gate. Jaya and Vijaya laugh at them and block their way with their maces.

This puzzles the Kumaras. The learned make no distinctions among those who dwell in the Bhagavan who holds everything within his abdomen, and instead—just as one sees the space inside a pot as the same as the space outside it—they see the individual atman as the same as the Supreme Atman. The gatekeepers look like their master yet retain a sense of difference, and this sense of difference makes them think their Lord needs protection. How can this be? The four Kumaras decide that the gatekeepers must possess some fault and should be purified by living in the worlds where their enemies are the three villains: lust, anger, and greed. They curse the two gatekeepers to that effect. Jaya and Vijaya fall at the Kumaras' feet and plead, "You are right to punish us, but please let us not succumb to the infatuation (*moha*) that erases continual memory of the Bhagavan."

The Bhagavan of the Lotus Navel learns of this incident and appears to the four Kumaras with his attendants. Above him is a white umbrella. Chamaras or fly whisks fan him, Shri shines on his breast, a yellow cloth is girdled around his hips, a garland of wildflowers hangs from his neck, and bracelets grace his wrists. One handsome forearm with a bracelet rests on the shoulder of Garuda, and the other hand twirls a lotus. He has a crown studded with gems, he wears earrings and a necklace, and the gem kaushtubha rests at his neck. The Kumaras had never before seen Vaikuntha, and ask that they may always worship his feet, even during the sorrows of other births, and like those who take refuge in them, keep his feet rather than emancipation as their highest value. Pleased

by the words of these sages firm in yoga, the Lord of Vaikuntham responds with an astonishing graciousness.

> Your punishment of my servants Jaya and Vijaya is just. Please pardon me, because their insult of you was mine, for the error of a servant belongs to the master. I am Vaikuntha whose glory, when heard, purifies everyone down to the eater of dogs, but it gains that power from persons like you. I would cut off my own arm if it opposed you. My feet have the power to purify and because of that Shri never leaves me, though I am not attached to her. They gain that power from people like you who worship them. I do not enjoy the offerings made to me through the mouth of the sacrificial fire as much as the offerings made to me through the mouths of Brahmins who dedicate all their acts to me and eat with satisfaction. The water poured on my feet falls on the head of Shiva and purifies the whole world, but on my crown I bear the dust from the feet of Brahmins like you. Brahmins, cows that yield milk, and those without refuge are my own body—those who think them different will be torn apart by the vultures of Yama. I am pleased when a devotee sees me in a Brahmin who insults him, and in return smiles at him and speaks to him affectionately. May you let these servants who have acted against my intentions undergo their just punishment and then return to me quickly. (*BP* 3.16.1–12)

This puzzles the Kumaras. How is it that the Bhagavan would worship Brahmins who worship him, and would ask them for a favor? It is by his favor, after all, that yogins cross over death. And it is he who originates the eternal dharma, protects it through his bodily descents, and is its changeless supreme secret. How amazing! Anyone wanting something worships at the feet of Goddess Shri, yet Goddess Shri worships at his feet, but he ignores her and clings to the Parama Bhagavatas who are his servants. But the Kumaras do understand that if the Bhagavan does not protect the Brahmins, the auspicious path of the devas will be lost, because people always follow the example set by the highest authority. Vaikuntha venerates Brahmins, but this does not decrease his glory. "Please do to us whatever you wish for having punished your gatekeepers" they ask. Bhagavan Vaikuntha then tells them that Jaya and Vijaya shall be born as asuras angry at him, and that their anger will focus their mind on him. Through their confrontation with him they will develop the consciousness of samadhi and will quickly return to him, for this is his will. With great joy, the four Kumaras circumambulate the Lord, prostrate to him, and take their leave.

The Bhagavan now explains to Jaya and Vijaya that he agrees to this curse because it fulfills an earlier punishment pronounced for them by Goddess Rama when they prevented her from entering his sleeping place. "By means of



FIGURE 12.3. Panel SP3: Vaikuntha appears to the Kumaras at the cursing of Jaya and Vijaya (prior to repair). IFDI.

consciousness unified through confrontation," he tells them, "you shall fulfill the Brahmins' curse and return to me quickly." The Lord of Vaikuntham returns to his splendid palace and Jaya and Vijaya are thrown out of his dwelling place. They enter Kashyapa's powerful seed and in the inauspicious period of sunset he deposits it in the womb of Diti. She then gives birth to the asura brothers Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha.

THE PANEL. The Lord of Vaikuntham stands in the center of the panel under an umbrella in a posture of ease, resting the weight of his body on his left leg, which pushes his left hip to the west (Figure 12.3). He places his foot slightly forward. He has two pairs of arms. His two hands in the back hold the wheel and conch, which are damaged. His left forearm in front rests on Garuda's right shoulder, as the story says. His right arm in the front is no longer visible, and his right hand at the side of his torso is damaged, but presumably holds the lotus the story says he twirls. Garuda with two arms stands to Vaikuntha's left in a servile posture. He crosses his legs and bends his knees to make his right shoulder the correct height for his master's left forearm to rest on comfortably.

Three figures stand one above the other at Vaikuntha's right side. The very small bottom figure, with a pointed cap, perhaps a turban, has two arms and a large stomach, and rests his right hand on his hip. His left hand is missing. He remains unidentified. Of the larger figure above him only the torso and legs remain, and they are obscured by plaster. He appears to have two arms; his right hand is at his stomach and the left hand is at his chest. He may be one of Vaikuntha's attendants. Only the head and chest of the figure above him are visible, and he appears to be an ascetic, because his right earlobe is long and is free of earrings. He is probably Sanaka, the eldest of the four Kumaras. Two male figures commonly found in other panels fly at the level of the umbrella, one on each side. The one on the west flies above Garuda, and its relatively massive form extends the mass of Garuda's body upward so that these two figures on the western side of the panel balance the four figures on the eastern side.

The Panels on the Porch Facing North

Panel NP1: Bhadrashravas Worships Hayagriva in the Region of Bhadrashva

THE STORY. This panel is an example of one scene representing multiple stories. The panel depicts the region of Jambu called Bhadrashvas (Auspicious Horse), which is east of the central Ilavrita region where Mount Meru stands (*BP* 5.18.1–6). But it also represents three stories that take place during the deluge between the previous kalpa and the Daytime of Boar, which is represented ahead by Panel W6 discussed in chapter 11. And through one of these stories it alludes to the region of Jambu called Ramyaka, which is immediately north of the Ilavrita region.

Bhadrashravas (He of Gracious Fame) is the son of the rishi Dharma, who is born of Brahma's nipple; he rules this region of Bhadrashvas. Together with leaders of his clan he perceives the Bhagavan Vasudeva's most beloved body of purity, which is made of dharma, has the head of a horse, and is commonly

known as Hayagriva (He with the Neck and Head of a Horse). In the consciousness of supreme samadhi they worship him as depicted here, and laud his role in preserving the Vedas: "At the end of the age the Vedas were concealed by darkness at the bottom of the Rasa realm. But at the request of Brahma, you retrieved them in the form of a man-horse and gave them back to him" (*BP* 5.18.6). (They refer to the stories of Hayagriva and Madhusudana discussed at Panel 19 in chapter 10.) Their recollection of this Hayagriva story, however, evokes two other stories that take place during this same deluge between kalpas. One is the story of the asura named Hayagriva, who is an enemy of the Vedas. This story is brief, but it frames the longer and famous story of the Bhagavan as Matsya the Fish. The stories of the asura Hayagriva and of Matsya the Fish go this way (*BP* 8.24).

When the previous kalpa ends and the deluge is drowning all the worlds, Brahma nods off to sleep and the Vedas drop from his mouth. A king of Danavas named Hayagriva seizes them. Hari the Ruler perceives this and takes the shape of a carp fish (*BP* 8.24.7–8). A Dravida king named Satyavrata (Of True Vows) lives during this previous kalpa and is a devotee of Narayana. While performing rites in the Kritamala or Vaigai River, which runs through the Pandya realm, Hari appears to him in the river as a frightened carp (the carp is the Pandya emblem). Out of compassion the Pandyan responds to the carp's appeal for help, and over time it grows larger and larger until the king realizes it is Hari Narayana in the form of a fish (*matsya*). One day this fish tells king Satyavrata that in seven days the cosmic deluge will occur, but that he will send a boat made of earth in which the king will put the seeds of all vegetation and animals, the Seven Seers, and himself. Throughout the night of the deluge the Seven Seers will provide light as he, as a fish, pulls the boat, which will be tied to his horn by a great snake.

King Satyavrata prepares for the deluge by making a seat of darbha grass with their pointed ends facing east, and sits on it facing northeast to meditate on Hari as Fish.[5] When the deluge comes, the boat appears with the Seven Seers (who appear on the panel corresponding to this one on the floor above at Panel 2 discussed in chapter 6). The Seers tell the Pandyan to visualize Keshava, who will save them all. When he does this, an enormous Fish with one horn appears and they set out. The king sings to Madhusudana (Slayer of Deluded Passion) and takes refuge in Matsya as "the supreme guru of the guru" (*BP* 8.24.48). While floating in the darkness of the deluge, Matsya teaches him and the Seven Seers "the sankhya, yoga, and kriya of the divine *Purana-samhita*" (*BP* 8.24.55). The compound *Purana-samhita* can mean "the collection of ancient lore" and denote the puranas. Or, it can mean "the collection of the past" or "the ancient collection" and denote the Pancharatra texts called samhita. Sankhya (metaphysical analysis), yoga (unified consciousness through self-discipline), and kriya (sacred ceremony) are taught in both purana and samhita, but the story may refer specifically to the teaching now found in

the *Satvata-samhita*. It describes itself as taught by the Plower in the Malaya mountains in the Dravida realm of the Pandyas (Smith 1975: 515), its teachings are illustrated by the Plower's north-facing side, and sankhya and yoga underlie the kriya of its threefold consecration (*dikshatraya*).

When the deluge ends, Brahma awakes. Hari, who has slain the asura Hayagriva, now gives Brahma the Vedas to use for his new daytime. Hari also gives the Pandyan king a reward: Satyavrata will be reborn into this kalpa, the Daytime of Boar, through Surya the Sun and reign during our seventh Manu Term. His name will be Shraddhadeva, and as the son of Sun (Vaivasvata) he will be the progenitor of the Solar Dynasty through Ikshvaku (*BP* 9.1–3). In the *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna told Arjuna that he had taught unchanging yoga to Sun (Vivasvata), who had taught it to Manu, who had taught it to Ikshvaku, who had passed it on to royal seers, but that the tradition (*parampara*) was finally lost (*BG* 4.1–3). Krishna thus taught it anew for the Lunar Dynasty and summarized its supreme secret in *Bhagavad-gita* 4.4–42.

The Panel. This panel, like others, suffers from what appears to be a layer of plaster that is not original and that obscures original details, some of which are visible where the plaster is broken. The large figure of Hayagriva stands in the western half of the panel, facing the viewer, with the crowned head of a horse (Figure 12.4). His shoulders turn slightly eastward toward Bhadrashravas and two leaders of his clan aligned vertically at the eastern side of the panel. Hayagriva has two pairs of arms. His back two hands hold the conch and wheel, his front left hand rests on his left hip, and his front right hand appears to form a mudra at his right breast. Plaster obscures the details of his royal dress, which extends down to his ankles.

Bhadrashravas and his companions have crowns and one pair of arms. Bhadrashravas, the larger male sitting in samadhi at the level of Hayagriva's feet, looks directly forward, and holds his left hand at his breast and his right at his stomach. Damage has erased the gestures of the hands. Two leaders of his clan stand behind him, one above the other. The man behind Bhadrashravas holds his right hand at his chest, looks upward toward Hayagriva, and gestures toward him with his open left hand. The man behind him gazes directly forward, but his arms are not visible. Damage to the panel above him suggests that a fourth clan leader stood behind him. The four figures flying at the top of the panel appear to be the four Kumara sons of Brahma named Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanatkumara. As the eldest, Sanaka would be the larger figure on the west facing directly forward and forming the anjalimudra at his chest. The three behind him hold their right hand at the chest and raise their open left hand upward in praise (the left hand of the fourth is not visible). All four appear to wear beads around their necks, wrists, and upper arms, and have their hair piled up as if a crown.



FIGURE 12.4. Panel NP1: Bhadrashravas worships Hayagriva in the region of Bhadrashva (prior to repair). Source unidentified.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. According to Bhagavata cosmography, our ruling Vaivasvata Manu, the son of Sun, worships Matsya the Fish in the region of Jambu called Ramyaka. For him, Fish is the embodiment of purity (*sattva*) who sounds the Veda and—like a man pulling the strings of a female

puppet—controls the universe from inside and out, yet remains invisible even to the world's protectors (*BP* 5.18.24–28; 8.13.1). Oddly enough, that invisible carp simultaneously represents the internally controlling Ordainer, the externally controlling Surya, and a devout lineage of Bhagavatas in the Pandya Dynasty of Madurai.

The Sun as our Manu's father brings us back to the horse in this panel. Surya the Sun appeared as a horse when Yajnavalkya prayed the Gayatri mantra to him (as depicted earlier in the Kalki and Maru panel, Panel W4). Appearing with a horse's head and neck, he taught Yajnavalkya the set of Yajus mantras said to be derived from "the speedy one," a horse.[6] Sun with the head of a horse also suggests dynastic regeneration through the lengthy horse sacrifice, just as Daksha with the head of a goat (in Panel SP1) represents the lengthy sattra (BP 4.2–8, esp. 4.7.8).[7]

The *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, a supplement to the *Vishnu Purana* of about the seventh century (dated by Kramrisch 1928, 3–5), confirms this panel's connection to the Plower formation and the jnana and bala he manifests. The Plower (Samkarshana), that text says, represents the Pancharatra Agama, and Hayagriva is a form of Samkarshana.[8] Moreover, Hayagriva represents the *Sama Veda* with which Krishna identified himself in *Bhagavad-gita* 10.22. The *Sama Veda*, a collection of mantras mostly from the *Rig Veda*, is sung during sacrifices by the udgatri priest. For Bhagavatas initiated into the eight-syllable mantra, the Kali Yuga version of the *Sama Veda* was the communal singing of sankirtana using the sacred sound *Om*.

If we place the story in the context of eighth-century Kanchipuram, the asura named Hayagriva evokes Hayagriva in the Buddhist cult of Avalokiteshvara, specifically in the latter's role as Lord of the World (Lokanatha). Hayagriva and Tara are important figures in that cult, and Hayagriva was known as Bodhisattva Hayagriva Avalokiteshvara. In the presently existing Kamakshi temple in Kanchipuram, which has replaced the original, sculptures of Tara and Hayagriva have been found, suggesting that a Lokanatha temple once stood at the city's center near the then-existing Goddess shrine (Venkataraman 1968: 15).

The story of Hayagriva is thus connected to Esoteric Buddhism. According to Rob Linrothe, Esoteric Buddhists adopted the "Brahmanical Hayagriva" because the sound of a horse's neighing resembles the power of the spoken dharani, or spell, and his swiftness that of a bodhisattva (Linrothe 1999: 86–87). Sculptural evidence for the Buddhist Hayagriva appears in Aurangabad's Cave 7, which dates in the late sixth or early seventh century (Linrothe 1999: 87). The earliest textual evidence for him so far dates to 653 in the *Dharani Samgraha* translated into Chinese, and in the Gilgit manuscripts, whose orthography dates them to the sixth to seventh centuries (Linrothe 1999: 91). A short dharani text on Hayagriva from Gilgit, Linrothe said, "Invokes the image of a horse-faced deity (Hayagriva) above the images of Lokesvara

Avalokitesvara, who is flanked by Vajradhara (i.e., Vajrapani) and Avalokitesvara. The fact that the manuscript requires that Hayagriva be visualized as *vadavamukha* (horse-headed) testifies to his relation to the pre-Buddhist Hayagriva, who is visualized in such a way" (Linrothe 1999: 91).

Despite that textual requirement, as Linrothe noted, the sculpted remains of the Buddhist Hayagriva usually do not depict him with a horse's head, but with the pot belly of a vamana or yaksha, or the slim form of a hero (*vira*), and with fangs. Linrothe described an early image from Nalanda this way: "He stands with one leg bent behind the other, leaning to the side and looking slightly upwards. He appears to be of the *vamana*-Yaksha body type. Though he barely emerges from the shadowy background, the features of his distinctly grotesque face are visible: furrowed eyebrows and forehead, a hooked nose and a grin that exposes fangs. He makes the *vinayahasta* gesture, crossing his wrists in front of his chest. The Nalanda Hayagriva's hair is relatively short, separated into fat 'Guptesque' curls that divide in the center and frame his face. . . . His lower torso is damaged, but he seems to wear a *dhoti*, leaving his upper torso bare. Large earrings hang at his ears, and a bulky necklace circles his neck" (Linrothe 1999: 97).

Although Linrothe cites Robert H. van Gulik's opinion that the name Hayagriva was independently given to an asura opponent of Vishnu, it seems to me that the asura Hayagriva in the *Bhagavata Purana* depicts the Bhagavata judgment of the Buddhist Hayagriva. The asura Hayagriva appears briefly in the *Mahabharata*, which also contains a reasoned critique of Buddhist Dharma by a descendent of the seer Kapila, who taught samkhya and yoga (*Santi Parva* 218; Ganguli 1980, 1990 9: 115–117 and notes). Possibly the *Bhagavata Purana* story of the asura Hayagriva was about a specific Buddhist shrine in Kanchipuram. The *Dharani Samgraha* of 653 prescribes a bodhimanda or altar for Bodhisattva Hayagriva Avalokiteshvara that faces west, as did all the Bhagavata shrines of early Kanchipuram. According to Linrothe's summary: "In the middle of the altar should be an image of Hayagriva, on the eastern side should be Ekadasamukha (eleven-headed) Avalokitesvara, at the northern side the eight-armed (Amoghapasa?) Avalokitesvara, in the south the eight Naga-raja. . . . The [aspirant] should enter the *bodhi-manda* and do *puja*-worship. One should concentrate on Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Then in the midst of worship of all the bodhisattva, *siddhis* (powers) will be manifest" (Linrothe 1999: 90). As Linrothe noted, the emphasis in that altar and worship is on Avalokiteshvara; Hayagriva is merely an adjunct to him, "at best, a manifestation, or a *dharani* personification," because siddhis flow from Avalokiteshvara.

Perhaps the asura Hayagriva is the Bhagavata way to criticize the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara without naming him directly. The siddhis his worship generates may refer to the siddhis produced by Vedic fire rites employed by Esoteric Buddhist priests on behalf of the Kanchipuram court. Such Buddhist fire rites are referred to in the Tamil poem *Manimekalai*, where Brahmin

Buddhist practitioners appear as "illegitimate" Brahmins (Hudson 1997). Reflecting a long-standing cultic rivalry in the royal court prior to Nandivarman's rule, the story of the demon Hayagriva appears to critique Esoteric Buddhist rites from the Bhagavata perspective. The south-facing Vaikuntha panel directly opposite this one (Panel SP3) refers to such rivalry, because its story says that the Bhagavata king has the duty to strengthen Dharma at a time when the Dharma of imposters (*pakhanda*) is appealing.

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, the story of the demon Hayagriva frames the story of Matsya the Fish. That story in turn introduces the Solar Dynasty of Ikshvaku from whom both Rama of the *Ramayana* and the Shakyamuni Buddha descended. According to Sridhara Svamin in *Bhavarthabodhini*, the oldest commentary on the *Bhagavata Purana*, the Fish story does not describe an actual deluge but rather an initiatory vision resembling Markandeya's later visionary experience of a deluge during which he received a special revelation.[9] Markandeya is depicted ahead at Panel N4 (Figure 13.6). As a metaphor for historic events, the Fish story suggests that sometime in the past the Veda had been "rescued" in the Dravida realm of the Pandyas through royal patronage of the Pancharatra Agama. As noted earlier, the story of the *Manimekalai* (ca. sixth century) suggests that the contest was between the Bhagavatas and the Esoteric Buddhists.

Panel NP2: The Person of the Sacrifice Announces Rishabha's Birth

This panel and the next, NP3, appear to represent the stories of Rishabha and his son Bharata. Brief versions of these stories appear in the *Vishnu Purana* (2.1.27–34). In the *Bhagavata Purana*, however, they are lengthy and told with specific reference to the first Jaina Tirthankara named Rishabha, his son Bharata, and Rishabha's nine ascetic sons "clothed in the wind," and with brief reference to the fifth tirthankara, named Sumati.

These panels devoted to the path of refuge testify to its importance for southern Bhagavatas by the eighth century, as the *Bhagavata Purana* confirms in one the few portions that may reasonably be dated. The portion consists of the story of Rishabha and his son Bharata, which comprises chapters two through fifteen of Book Five, and the story of Rishabha's nine shramana sons, who are "clothed in the wind" (*vatarashana*), which comprises chapters two through five of Book Eleven. The stories of Rishabha and Bharata appear to have been inserted in a book that otherwise teaches cosmology, and the story of Rishabha's shramana sons appears to have been inserted into the Krishnakatha as it leads to the destruction of the Yadavas. The entire portion may be dated to eighth- or ninth-century Kanchipuram, during Pallava rule.

As we discussed in chapter 1, there are two reasons for this dating. Padmanabha Jaini provides the first in his discussion of the Jaina story of the tirthankara Rishabha, which, he argues, gave rise to the Bhagavata story of

Rishabha in the *Bhagavata Purana* (Jaini 1977: 321–337). Jaini does not include the stories of Rishabha's shramana sons, but it appears to me that they belong to the same body of lore, which Narada refers to as an "old legend" (*itihasa puratana*) about a discussion between Rishabha's sons and a king of Videha named Nimi (*BP* 11.2.14). The second reason for this dating appears in the lesson the shramana named Karabhajana teaches King Nimi, which we will discuss at Panel N3 below (*BP* 11.5.29–34). Since, as argued in chapter 1, this portion of the *Bhagavata Purana* cannot be earlier than the sixth century CE, and more likely belongs to the eighth or ninth century, it coincides with Jaini's dating. Moreover, it coincides with the Alvar poets who illustrated in their poems the doctrine that Karabhajana says is popular in Dravida: complete submission to the "Giver of Emancipation" (Mukunda), with no debts or obligations to any other being, and with love (*priya*) completely focused on him (*BP* 11.5.41–42).

THE STORY. The story takes place during the first Manu Term, when Brahma's son Svayambhuva is the ruling Manu (*BP* 5.1–5). The Manu and his son Priyavrata dwell in the valley of the mountain Gandhamadana. Narada appears and teaches Priyavarta about the atman and about Krishna, and Priyavrata resolves to keep his mind continuously focused on the Bhagavan. Brahma assures Priyavrata that because he has conquered the enemies of the six senses and the Lord's lotus feet are his protection, he can enjoy the task of kingship he has been assigned and then abandon it. Accordingly, Svayambhuva Manu enthrones his son and retires. Priyavrata rules Earth for eleven crores of years, continuously focused on the Bhagavan and without desire, though he enjoys the pleasures of his wife Barhishmati. They have ten sons and one daughter. Three sons (Kavi, Mahavira, and Savana) renounce the world as paramahamsas and are constantly in Vasudeva's presence. Three sons by another wife become the third, fourth, and fifth Manus (Uttama, Tamasa, and Raivata).

Priyavrata is equal to Surya in splendor and speed, and one day he follows Surya's chariot around Mount Meru in his own brilliant chariot, seeking to banish night and give the whole of Earth daylight at the same time. Seven times he rides around, and seven times the wheels of his brilliant chariot dig concentric ruts in Earth. These ruts become seven oceans. Between these oceans are seven continents, and Priyavrata assigns his remaining seven sons by Barhishmati to rule them. Finally he gives up the throne and becomes an ascetic.

Agnidhra, Priyavarta's eldest son, now rules Jambu. He and an apsaras singer named Purvachitti have nine sons. Each rules a region of the Jambu continent and marries one of Mount Meru's nine daughters. Nabhi, the eldest, rules the southernmost region later called Bharata. He and his wife Merudevi sponsor a fire sacrifice in order to gain a son. During these rites the Yajnapurusha, or Person of the Sacrifice, appears with two pairs of arms, dressed in

all his splendor, and bearing the conch, lotus, flower garland, wheel, Kaushtubha jewel, mace, and so forth. He promises that a part of him will be born as their son. This son is Rishabha, born with a body of purity (*sattva*) to demonstrate to the world the dharma of naked shramanas who observe chastity, and to demonstrate that rituals motivated by desire are not the primary teaching of Veda (*BP* 5.3.20; 5.7.12).

Nabhi installs Rishabha as ruler and leaves with Merudevi. Rishabha, the Ruler of Yoga who can bring rain, dwells in a region of sacrificial rites and therefore learns the Vedas with a guru and becomes a householder. Indra gives him Jayanti as wife, and they have one hundred sons equal to their father, nine of whom are great ascetic Bhagavatas who teach Bhagavata Dharma. Rishabha rules perfectly, everyone has all they need, and no one desires anything other than greater love for him. Rishabha expounds bhakti in an assembly of Brahmin rishis and lauds the Brahmin who contains the Vedas within his self. Food offered Vasudeva by feeding a Brahmin, he says, is more acceptable than food offered through the Vedic fire.

After this, Rishabha places Bharata on the throne and, to demonstrate the life of the paramahamsa ascetic, leaves with nothing but his body, completely nude and with disheveled hair (*BP* 5.28–35). At times he appears to be mad, blind, dumb, deaf, drunk, and is silent and unresponsive to anyone. Wherever he travels people persecute him with violent abuse, but nothing disturbs him, for he is absorbed in the atman. In appearance he is naturally handsome and attractive, but he now appears ghoulish, and people find him repulsive. Since wandering brings only abuse, he adapts the discipline of the python and lies down and remains in one place; he takes his food in this place and then rolls in his excreta until it covers him—yet his feces is fragrant for the distance of ten yojanas. Then he adopts the discipline of the cow, deer, and crow—walking, sitting, eating, drinking, and excreting as they do—and then other disciplines, and all the while he rejects the siddhi powers inevitably produced by such discipline of self. His extraordinary tapas refines his body to an exceptional degree, and he moves southward to the region of Konka, Venka, and Kutaka in southern Karnataka. In the forest at the foot of the mountain Kutakachala he keeps stones in his mouth and dwells like a ghoul, hair in disarray and naked. When the forest catches fire it consumes his body.

In the Kali Yuga, the king of Konka, Venka, and Kutaka named Arhat will hear about Rishabha's behavior and out of delusion will follow it. In this age when unrighteousness thrives, his deluded understanding of it will promote the evil ways of the pakhanda imposters. The delusion of God's maya will lead people of the Kali Yuga to abandon their own rites and disciplines and to take up wicked vows that mock the devas. They will not bathe, rinse their mouths, or observe rules of purity, and they will pull out the hair of their heads with their own hands. They will reject the *brahman*, the authority of the Brahmins, the Person of the Sacrifice, the Vedas, the teachers of the Vedas, and the God



FIGURE 12.5. Panel NP2: The Person of the Sacrifice announces Rishabha's birth (prior to repair). Source unidentified.

the Vedas reveal, and will fall into complete darkness. What then is the purpose of this Rishabha avatara? It is to help those who have an abundance of passion (*rajas*) to attain emancipation characterized by "isolation" or kaivalya.

Through these stories radical ascetic practices associated with Digambara Jaina shramanas patronized by rulers in Karnataka are brought into Bhagavata Dharma as consistent with the Vedic sacrifice that Jaina teaching rejects; at the same time, Jaina shramanas and their devotees in Karnataka are condemned as deluded. Bhagavatas flourishing in the Dravida realm, however, are extolled. Historical details in these stories as told in the *Bhagavata Purana* suggest that they were composed after this temple was built, which means these panels illustrate earlier versions.

THE PANEL. Plaster obscures the details. A kinnari, half woman and half bird, stands on the lintel directly above the central standing figure of the Person of the Sacrifice (Figure 12.5). From her head to her waist she appears human, with bare breasts and long stretched earlobes. She wears no crown and faces directly forward. Her left hand holds vertically a staff that may have an object on its top. Her right arm reaches to the east in an unknown gesture. Beneath the cloth that surrounds her waist she appears as a bird. Her legs bend at the knees toward the east as if dancing, and a very long and fully feathered tail resembling that of a peacock emerges from under her skirt to the west and curves up to the level of her face. This kinnari signifies the northern mountains where Nabhi's palace is located.

Directly under her and the lintel stands the Person of the Sacrifice announcing the birth of Rishabha to Nabhi and Merudevi during the fire sacrifice they sponsor (Figure 12.6). He stands in a stiff frontal position, wearing a tall crown, and has two pairs of arms. His right hand at the back holds the wheel (damaged), but the left hand and the conch it holds are missing. He rests his front left hand on his left hip and forms the abhayamudra with his right hand at the side of his right breast. Two unidentified crowned males stand at his sides outside the pillars and lintel enclosing him. The one on the Yajnapurusha's right holds his open right hand at his chest with palm facing inward, and holds his left hand at his left breast, bending his fingers toward the palm. The one on his left holds his left hand at his chest with an uncertain mudra; his right hand is indiscernible.

Panel NP3: The Person of the Sacrifice Appears to Rishabha's Son Bharata

THE STORY. Rishabha's eldest son Bharata is consecrated king, marries, and has five sons (*BP* 5.7–14). During his rule, the region Ajanabha receives its current name of Bharata. He is a pious sponsor of Vedic sacrifices in many forms, and offers their many fruits to Vasudeva. These acts purify Bharata's



FIGURE 12.6. The Person of the Sacrifice announces Rishabha's birth. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

consciousness, his bhakti develops, and Vasudeva appears in his heart as the Person of the Sacrifice wearing the Shrivatsa emblem, the kaushtubha gem, the wild flower garland, the conch, wheel, mace, and so forth. This appearance moves Bharata's bhakti to a deeper level. He rules for thousands of years and then turns his realm over to his five sons, becomes an ascetic, and wanders to the ashram of Pulaha near the Chakranadi River. Dressed in deerskin, he lives a detached ascetic life of extraordinary devotion.

Nevertheless, unconsumed karmic fruits transform his compassion for a distressed fawn into attachment to her, and this attachment leads him to neglect both yoga and bhakti altogether. When Bharata dies, therefore, he is born in the Kalanjara mountains as a fawn. But he retains remembrance of his previous life. He leaves his mother to wander and returns to the ashrams of Pulaha and Pulastya, where he waits until his unconsumed karma has run its course, and



FIGURE 12.7. Panel NP3: The Person of the Sacrifice appears to Rishabha's son Bharata with guardian on the west (prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1993.

then drowns himself in a river. Bharata is then born to an Angirasa Brahmin's second wife as a boy with a twin sister. To detach himself from his family he adopts the extreme practices of the avadhuta ascetic followed by his earlier father, Rishabha. And his adventures—including being offered as a human victim to Goddess Bhadra Kali—illustrate vividly the supremely detached stance toward the world produced by devotion to Vasudeva through the prolonged ascetic practice of yoga. The story does not relate the end of Bharata's life as an Angirasa Brahmin avadhuta. But it does say that he has a descendent named Sumati, who also follows Rishabha's extreme asceticism. In the Kali Yuga, we are told, pakhanda imposters of deluded minds will worship him as a non-Vedic devata or deity (*BP* 5.15.1). Sumati is the name of the seventh Jaina tirthankara.

Bharata's nine brothers who are great Bhagavatas are also shramanas resembling the Digambaras, ascetics "clothed by the four directions of space." But they are arhats, or enlightened beings, who perceive the entire universe as

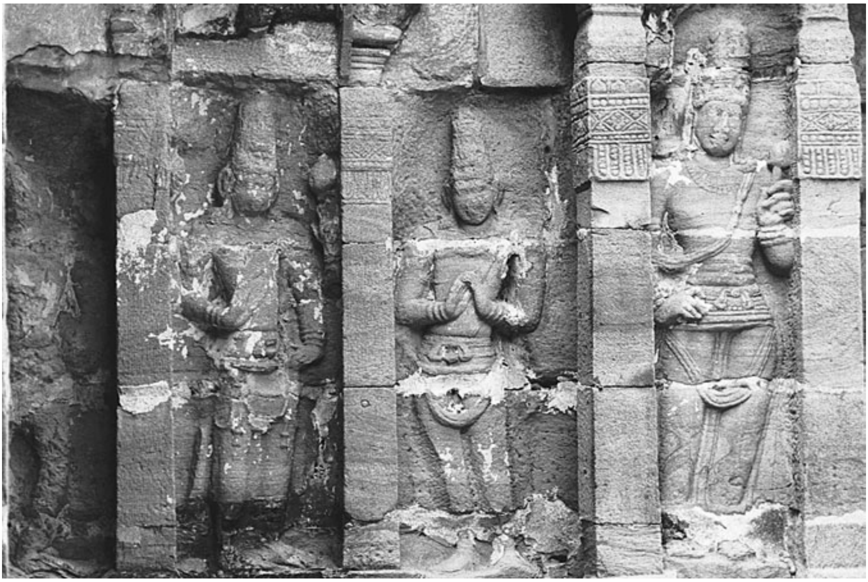


FIGURE 12.8. The Person of the Sacrifice appears to Bharata with guardian on the west. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

the Bhagavan's shape and roam freely however they wish. One day they appear at a scriptural discussion that numerous rishis conduct on behalf of King Nimi in Mithila of Videha. At the king's request, these nine shramanas enter into a very long discussion of Bhagavata Dharma, each making his own contribution (*BP* 11.2–5). They appear to provide a glimpse of the Bhagavata religion developing in Dravida during the eighth and ninth centuries.

The teaching of the shramana named Karabhajana is of particular interest (*BP* 11.5.19–42). In the Dvapara Yuga, he says, the Bhagavan is worshiped with the rites of Veda and Tantra (as in the Pancharatra Agama). But in the Kali Yuga he is worshiped with various Tantra rites in a form possessing a black complexion brilliant as sapphire, with all his arms, decorations, weapons, and attendants. Worshipers extol his glories and names through the group singing of sankirtana, and they pray a mantra that ends with a description of Rama, who leaves Adyodhya and chases a wild animal made of maya desired by Sita. The Kali Yuga is the greatest of the four ages because people attain their goal merely through sankirtana; no better method exists. "People for whom Narayana is the last resort," Karabhajana observes, "appear more often in the Kali Yuga than in other times, and especially in the Dravida region," by which he means the Pandya, Pallava, Chola, and Chera realms.

THE PANEL. An elephant with four tusks carrying four riders stands on the lintel facing west, following the tall umbrella of a royal procession (Figure

12.7). The mahout at the elephant's head is the largest of the riders. The man behind him raises his right hand to his face, the man behind him holds a pole with a flag pointed eastward, and the last man sits above the elephant's tail. A cloth with bells at its edge is draped over the elephant and is tied down by a strap running underneath its belly. An elephant with four tusks belongs to the species of Airavata, who was churned up from the Milk Ocean and taken by Indra (*BP* 10.59.37). A king who rules as an "Indra of Men" keeps an elephant, too, but in the Kali Yuga royal elephants have only two tusks. This elephant signifies the rule of King Bharata during the perfect Krita Yuga.

Beneath the lintel is the Person of the Sacrifice as he appears in Bharata's heart, effecting the change that leads Bharata to become an avadhuta ascetic (Figure 12.8). He faces forward and is royally dressed with a crown and two pairs of arms. His back pair of hands holds the wheel and the conch. His front left hand rests on his hip and his right hand forms the abhayamudra at his waist. The royally dressed and crowned male standing to his left bends gracefully eastward and forms the anjalimudra at his chest. The figure of the male to his right is badly damaged and indiscernible.

To the west of this set (the viewer's right) is the roofed structure housing the guard on the western side of the central and closed window. The guard wears an elaborate crown and is dressed royally, but appears to have only one pair of arms. Bending slightly westward he rests right hand on his hip, and holds a closed blossom upright at the side of his chest with his left hand.

13

The Vimana Panels on the Northern Side

The vimana's northern side depicts the Plower formation's jnana or knowledge, and bala or transformative power, as they are relevant to human life on Bharata. Numerical symbolism for Vasudeva's three vyuha formations begins with this side; the design of each corner panel visually encodes the numerical place of the formation it signifies: one, two, or three. The four panels bracketed by the two at the corners illustrate the Plower's power and knowledge. The two panels west of the wall's central opening illustrate bala through the life of Narada (Panel N2) and the birth of Kapila (Panel N3). The two panels east of the central opening illustrate jnana with the supreme secret that Vasudeva teaches Brahma (Panel N4), and the eight-syllable mantra, *Om namo narayanaya* (*Om* veneration to Narayana) represented by the rishi Nara venerating the rishi Narayana (Panel N5).

The Two Corner Panels

Panel N1: Vasudeva Teaching as Vaikunthanatha

The Story. According to the story (*BP* 2.9), when Brahma awoke in the lotus, he did not know how to create, so he sat down. Sitting in the lotus, he heard the letters *ta* and *pa* emerge from the surrounding waters. He knew it meant tapas and was divine instruction, so he practiced tapas for one thousand deva years, concentrating on the topic of emanation. Eventually, the Bhagavan revealed his own realm beyond purity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), and delusion (*tamas*),

beyond Time, and beyond maya, a vision granted to those who follow the tapas path of Paramahamsa ascetics (*BP* 2.9.17). It was the Imperishable Unmanifest that Krishna described as beyond thought and extremely difficult for humans to see (*BG* 12.1–12). It is transcendent Vaikuntha.

In that realm where purity does not mix with passion or delusion, and where Time and maya have no authority, Brahma saw that Vasudeva's attendants, whom both devas and asuras worship, look like him in miniature: They have dark blue bodies, four arms, lotus eyes, yellow garments, crowns, garlands, and brilliant jewels (*BP* 2.9.10–11). Brahma saw the Bhagavan attended by his four chief attendants, Sunanda, Nanda, Prabala, and Arhana, and by others (*BP* 2.9.15–16). He had four arms, brilliant reddish eyes, a smile, the shrivatsa on his chest, and wore a yellow garment, a crown, and earrings. He sat on a throne surrounded by the twenty-five powers (*shakti*) of sankhya and in union with his glorious excellences (*bhaga*) (*BP* 2.9.16; Tagare 1976–1979 1: 206).[1]

THE PANEL. This panel portrays the shape Brahma sees when Vasudeva teaches him during the predawn hour before his Daytime of Boar (*BP* 2.9.5–36). Vasudeva appears as the dominant figure in his own world (*svaloka*) (Figure 13.1). He sits in the middle of the panel in the posture of ease (*lalitasana*) looking directly north. He wears a tall crown and has two pairs of arms. The damaged hands of the back pair probably held the wheel and conch, as usual. His front left hand rests in his lap as if holding a palm-leaf book, and his front right arm bends up to form a mudra with its damaged hand, probably the jnanamudra or tattvamudra of knowledge and teaching: the open right hand is held at the right breast, the tips of the thumb and forefinger touch, and the remaining fingers extend upward (*PS* 1974: 72).

Six symmetrically arranged males frame Vasudeva, three on each side, whom Brahma names in his description of this scene (*BP* 2.9.14). The four large males on either side are his four great attendants. The figure standing to his right (east) forms the anjalimudra of veneration and has a large circular halo around his head. He is Sunanda (Delighting), who alludes to Surya waiting to emerge from the east to delight others. His flying companion on the opposite side (west) bends his left leg backward and raises his right knee to the level of his waist. He is Nanda (Pleasing), who alludes to the pleasing light of Soma the Moon moving westward. Prabala (Might) and Arhana (Honor) are the two crowned figures sitting on the ground at the level of Vasudeva's footstool, their legs crossed in front with their knees raised. Prabala as might is beneath Vasudeva's right hand, Arhana as honor is beneath his left hand. Whatever mudras they hold are lost by damage. The smaller upper figures, often found on other panels, are a subordinate category of being. They mark the panel's vertical axis running down through Vasudeva's crown.

The depiction points to two other panels. One depicts Gajendra on White Island in the Ocean of Milk directly above on the middle floor. The other

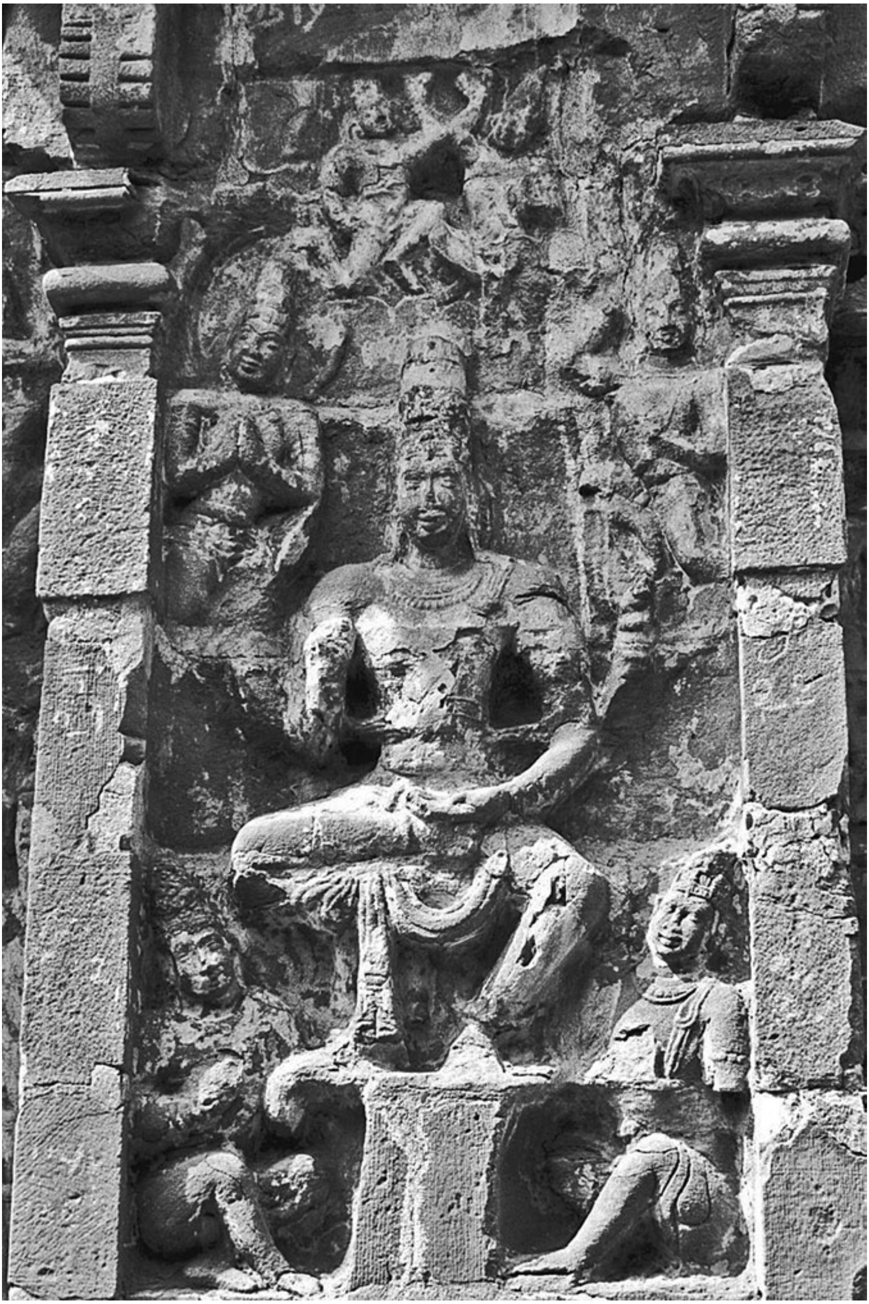


FIGURE 13.1. Panel N1: Vasudeva teaching as Vaikuntanatha. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

depicts Vaikunthanatha in Vaikuntha on White Island at the south-facing corner of the porch (Panel SP3, Figure 12.3). Vaikuntha was established on White Island during the fifth manvantara as Bhagavan's presence in the consciousness (*chitta*) in Brahma's body.

Later Pancharatra texts suggest that Vaikunthanatha seated here also points ahead to panels on this same side (Smith and Venkatachari 1969: 191–192). One text said that Vaikunthanatha has a book in his left hand and the teaching gesture (*upadesamudra*) in his right, and that he divided Veda into four parts as Vyasa the Compiler (Panel N2). Another text identified the seer Kapila (Panel N3) as Lord of the Moving Universe (Jagannatha) who is the inner witness of all beings and holds the gesture meaning "do not fear" (*abhayamudra*). A third said he is androgynous: his male half is Krishna's elder brother Balarama the Plower and his female half is Krishna's younger sister Subhadra.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This single dominant depiction of Vasudeva as Teacher signifies His first formation, Samkarshana the Plower of jnana knowledge and bala power. It depicts Vishnu's Supreme Home, which is beyond Lokaloka and transcendent to Brahma's body of spacetime. Vasudeva Krishna reveals this Home to gopas in Gokula (*BP* 10.28.14–17), and describes it to Arjuna on the Kuru Field as his realm (*padam*) without change, not illumined by sun, moon, or fire, "my highest home" from which no one ever falls (*BG* 15. 5–6). It also represents Krishna's teachings to Brahma in the lotus called the *Bhagavatam* (*BP* 3.5–7).

This panel alludes, moreover, to Vaikuntham on Earth northwest of Mount Meru in the Ocean of Milk. In the fifth Manu Term, a part of Vasudeva is born through Subhra's wife, Vikuntha, and is known as Vaikuntha; a group of devas are similarly born through her and are known as the Vaikunthas. For the pleasure of Rama the Beloved, Vaikuntha creates a pure realm on Earth also called Vaikuntham; it is located on a three-peaked island in the Ocean of Milk northwest of Bharata, which is the location of this panel on the temple mandala. Everyone who goes there is beyond Yama's reach. Its residents possess Vaikuntha's material form, and his body is purity (*sattvam*) free of passion (*BP* 8.5.1–6; 3.15.12–50). The Bhagavan Vaikuntha resides there as Lord of Vaikunhta (Vaikunthanatha), and because of his brilliance his domain is known as White Island (Shvetadvipa).

Panel N6: Ananta the Endless

THE STORY. In contrast to Vaikuntha's brilliant purity "above" the brahmanda, this panel at the opposite northeast corner depicts a dark part of the Bhagavan "beneath" the brahmanda as the self-deluded or "inebriated" snake Ananta, the Endless or Infinite, in the "realm of the root" (*muladesha*), thirty thousand

yojanas below the Patala level of Brahma's spacetime body, which sits on one of Ananta's many hoods (*BP* 5.25.1). As spacetime's nadir, Ananta supports Brahma's "spine," a vertical axis running up through earth's central Ilavrita region, through Mount Meru at its center, through the sky to Dhruva the pole star, and beyond to Satyaloka.

Shuka said that according the Satvata or Pancharatra doctrine, the delusive (*tamasika*) Samkarshana is the power that draws the one who sees and the object seen together into the "I" (*samkarshanamaham*), and from this comes his name (BP 5.25.2–13). Out of play (*lila*), the Plower graciously takes a material form of purified purity, white in color and blue in clothing, to reside in that "root" of the lower world. He supports spacetime on only one of his thousand hoods, and it appears the size of a mustard seed. Samkarshana's reddish eyes roll with intoxication, and when daughters of snakes (*naga*) touch his arms he stimulates their erotic feelings. (His form for dhyana is described in 5.25.7–13, 5.17.17–24, and 6.16.18–64.)

When Brahma's daytime ends, the eleven Rudra formations (*vyuha*) will emerge from Ananta's forehead to destroy the three worlds of death and birth and bring on Brahma's night. In the meantime, Satvatas focused in bhakti yoga worship him along with nagas, and naga princesses approach him for blessings. The rishi Narada with the gandharva musician Tumburu sings to his father Brahma about Ananta's material form of pure matter established on his self, a material form he assumes in play at the base of the dark Rasa waters for the sake of mankind. Brahma's son youngest Kumara son, Sanatkumara, leads other rishis dripping with Ganga's water to Ananta to learn about Vasudeva, who is the object of Ananta's contemplation. When Santakumara touches Ananta's foot, he awakes from contemplation of Vasudeva and teaches him the long *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 3.8–4.31).

Rudra Shiva, the only male dwelling in the central Ilavrita region, worships Samkarshana as depicted here (*BP* 5.17.14–24). When Brahma goes to sleep, the Eleven Rudras formation emerges from Samkarshana's forehead. Known as "Samkarshana's progeny," each of them, like Rudra Shiva, possesses three eyes and a trident (*BP* 5.25.3; following Goswami 1995 1: 359). To fulfill their devouring nature they burn up the universe, beginning at its bottom.

The Panel. Maitreya described this scene to Vidura (BP 3.8.3–9; also 5.25). Samkarshana's thousand hoods, he said, have crowns studded with brilliant gems; here they have been reduced to one resting on a single human head (Figure 13.2): Ananta with two pairs of arms and a tall crown resembles Samkarshana sitting in royal ease (rajalilasanam) on the sanctum wall inside. But his left foot rests on the throne, not his right, and we can see the toes of his right rather than left foot resting on a stool in front of the throne. His front right hand placed on the throne bears his weight. His front left elbow



FIGURE 13.2. Panel N6: Ananta the Endless (prior to repair). AIIS.

rests on his left knee. And his left hand forms a damaged mudra; perhaps it is the tattvasrishtimudra (emanation of the constituents): the forefinger is raised up and other fingers curl down over the thumb bent to the palm (PS 1974: 78).

To his left stands a daughter of Vasuki, Patala's premier naga (*BP* 5.24.31). She stands slightly behind Ananta's left and forms the anjalimudra with her

two hands. She has come to ask for a husband (*BP* 5.25.4–5; 3.8.5–6). Directly above her appears the torso and uncrowned head of a male gesturing in praise with his open right hand. He is the ruler of Shurasena named Chitraketu, who experiences Samkarshana by means of a mantra Narada taught him (*BP* 6.15.27; 6.16.18–65). Chitraketu will be born as the ruler of vidyadharas (bearers of the knowledge of spells), and after that as the asura named Vritra, two identities that illustrate the Plower's intentional defilement of jnana (*BP* 6.14–17).[2]

At the bottom of the panel in the eastern corner sits Sanatkumara, who has come there to learn about Vasudeva; he has just touched Samkarshana's foot with his head dripping Ganga's water. He has piled matted hair, long earlobes, armbands around his forearms, and a cloth around his waist. His left hand is damaged and the mudra formed by his right hand at his breast is difficult to read; it may be the tattvamudra or jnanamudra of knowledge or teaching (*PS* 1974: 72). Samkarshana, who had been absorbed in contemplating Vasudeva, has just opened his eyes to bless him.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This large central figure of Ananta signifies the self-deluded aspect of Vasudeva's first formation as the basis for everything. It depicts this intentionally "inebriated" endless matter as the support for Brahma's body throughout his Daytime of Boar (and it implies Tortoise as Ananta's support, the subject of Panel W1 discussed in chapter 11). The panel also represents the lesson Samkarshana teaches—about Brahma's lotus, Time, the Daytime of Boar, and Brahma populating the brahmanda—called the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 3.8.10–4.31).

Samkarshana taught Sanatkumara the *Bhagavatam* (*BP* 3.8.7), which is much of Maitreya's teaching in Books Three and Four, but without its opening three chapters on cosmogony (*BP* 3.5–7). Sanatkumara passed that *Bhagavatam* on to Sankhyayana, and he passed it to Parasara and to Brihaspati. Parasara taught it to Maitreya, who taught it to Vidura as part of the expanded *Bhagavatam* he had overheard Krishna teach Uddhava at Prabhasa (*BP* 3.8.7–9). The panel thus completes the theme of revealed knowledge that began with Hayagriva at the northeast corner of the porch. Revelation includes Veda, Agama, and Purana; in the terms of the *Chandogya Upanishad*, it includes the Atharva-Angirasa mantras that reveal Vasudeva in the epics and puranas. But here we learn that the most complete and authoritative statement of Bhagavata Dharma is Samkarshana's *Bhagavatam*, which contains much of the subject matter illustrated in the panels that lie ahead.

The panel reminds us that the Plower formation is the meaning of the entire north-facing sanctum wall, and that the Plower as a similarly inebriated snake sits behind the wall gazing outward through its central window. The Endless Ananta is Adishesha, "the primordial remainder" or "the first allowed to escape," names that match Vasudeva's infinite omniscient knowledge

(*jnana*) in its first formation. His pleasant inebriation signifies Vasudeva's voluntary delusion (*tamas*) of omniscience, which is necessary if a sense of "I" is to awaken within God to allow a perception of duality, the rise of passion, and the act of emanation. Inebriation allows the Knower of the Field to see double and plant the embryo in the Field. The embryo planted by the Plower is the consciousness of "I" in both God and people. In God's case, the awareness of "I" is Brahma. When Brahma awakes in the presunrise hour, he faces northwest to receive knowledge as illustrated by Boar teaching Brahma, and the entire north-facing side illustrates the context of that teaching. When the sunrise of Brahma's day begins, he faces northeast to begin his work of emanation. Brahma facing the rising sun is depicted in the panel that begins our discussion of the vimana's east-facing side, in the next chapter.

Slit-opening Flanked by Pratiharas

Between Panels N1 and N2 is a slit-opening flanked by two standing male and crowned figures (*pratihara*) in graceful postures of ease, each with two arms. Such slit-openings appear regularly on the vimana with similar portrayals, and we may pause to consider this one as representative of the others.

The standing male on the east holds his right hand on his hip and a flower stem in his left hand; its closed blossom stands erect. The male figure on the west mirrors that posture with his left hand on his hip and a a closed blossom standing in his right hand (Figure 13.3). The closed blossoms standing up point us to Krishna's instruction to Uddhava about the yogic practice of visualization (*dhyana*) through breath control (*prayanama*) and specifically to the syllable *Om* (*BP* 11.14.31–46).

In yogic praxis, Krishna said, the sound *Om* is to emanate up the subtle body from its base (*muladhara*) at the bottom of the spine; its rising emanation is like a fine thread of a lotus stalk and the continual ringing of a bell. Through breath control *Om* is to be brought to the lotus of the heart (*hridaya*), which droops on its stalk with its tip down. Through yoga practice three times a day at the samdhya "junctions" (sunrise, noon, sunset), the sadhaka gains control over the breath and eventually may cause the heart-lotus to stand up and bloom.

Once that is achieved, Krishna continued, the sadhaka is to visualize the sun, moon, and fire vertically arranged in the pericarp of the heart-lotus, and Krishna with four arms in its midst. Concentrated focus on parts of Krishna's body in that fire will lead the sadhaka to see all things in the Self and the Self in all things. The erect yet closed flowers held in the hands of the two males flanking this slit-opening (and repeated elsewhere on the vimana) suggest a moment in that yogic praxis; the sadhaka is ready for a consecration that will open the lotus blossom and enable him or her to see Krishna in its fire.

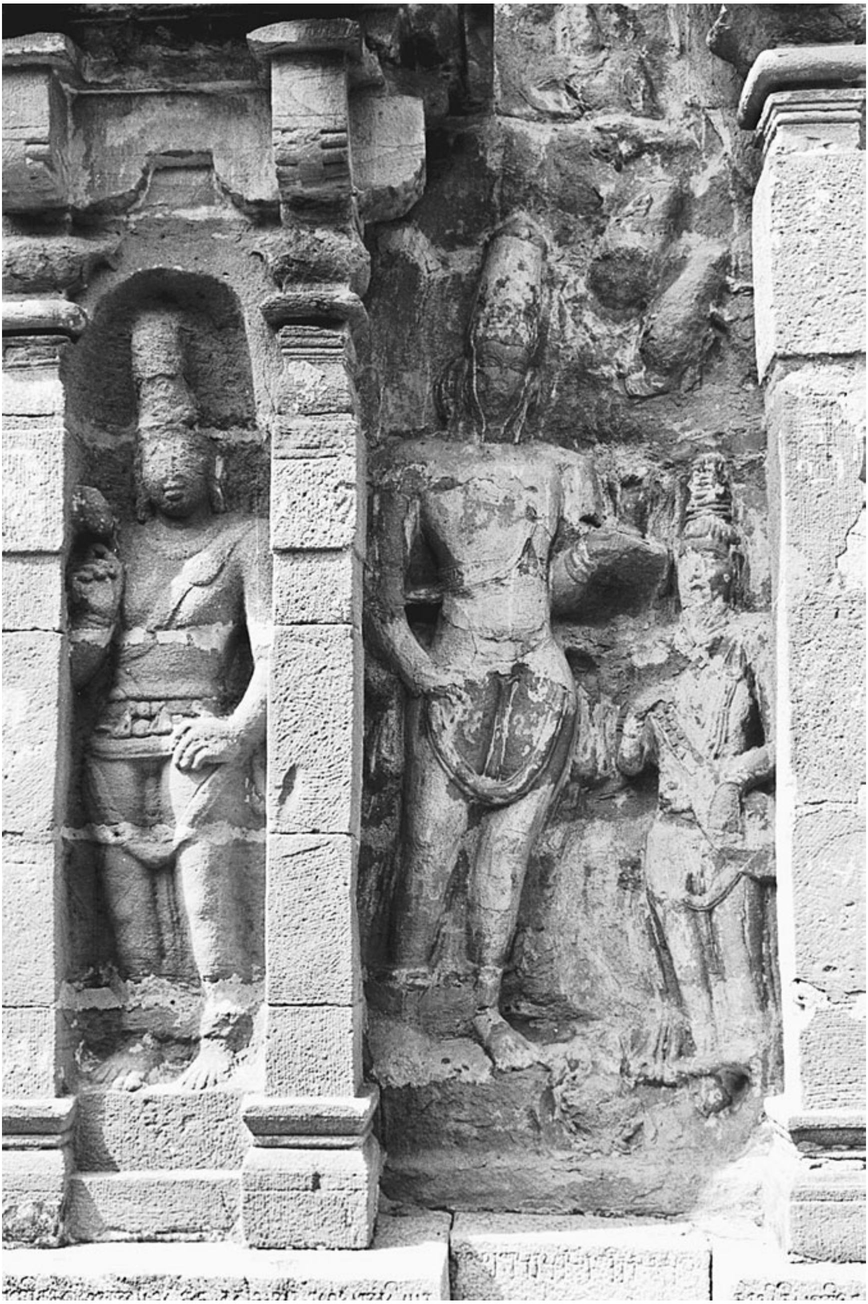


FIGURE 13.3. Panel N2: Naranarayana and Narada in the region of Bharata (adjacent to a dvarapala). Photo by Sathya Seelan.

The Four Bracketed Panels

Panel N2: Naranarayana and Narada in the Region of Bharata

Narada venerating Naranarayana introduces the teachings of samkhya, yoga, and the Pancharatra Agama. According to the narrator Shuka, throughout our kalpa the Bhagavan flourishes on Bharata in an invisible form known as Naranarayana (*BP* 5.19.9–15). In this panel the name means "Narayana as Man," but in a subsequent panel it means "Nara and Narayana."[3] Naranarayana performs tapas in order to bestow on self-controlled people the righteousness, omniscience, renunciation, sovereignty, tranquillity, and cessation that lead to apprehension of the Self (*BP* 5.19.9).

On Bharata, Shuka said, blessed (*bhagavat*) Narada resolved to instruct Savarni, the future Manu, in the Bhagavan's teaching about himself in samkhya, yoga, and the Pancharatra Agama (*BP* 5.19.10).[4] When Narada prayed to Narayana as Man he was with people of Bharata who followed the dharma of class and stage of life. Narayana may stand here as a man, but he is unaffected by his body and generates a similar detachment in others (*BP* 5.19.1–15).

Narada in the panel introduces a model of devotee that differs from the nonprocreative (*nivritti*) model of his brothers, the four Kumaras introduced in the previous chapter. Like them, Narada is free to travel anywhere in the three worlds of rebirth and even outside them, yet unlike them, his approach to God is appropriate to a person constantly plagued by passions such as greed and lust. In contrast to their instinctive yoga (with its five restraints of yama and five disciplines of niyama), Narada's method is the yoga of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*) with eleven yama and twelve niyama (*BP* 11.19.33–35).[5] Bhaktiyoga, a life of "service to the Bhagavan who bestows emancipation" (*mukundaseva*), is more relevant to people plagued by desire and greed (*kamalobha*) than the path of yoga (*BP* 1.7.36). By meditating on him, by offering all intended acts to him, and by singing of his deeds and attributes, Narada rides in a boat sure to cross death and birth. Whenever he sings of God, Narada feels him in his heart (*BP* 1.6.33–36).

Narada's bhaktiyoga is to be practiced by people in Bharata who follow the varnashramadharma of social class and stage of life (*BP* 5.19.9). According to the *Satvata-samhita*, which Narada learned from the Plower, bhaktiyoga applies to women as well as men, to old and to young, and to the "clean" and the "unclean." Agamic consecration removes "uncleanness" and qualifies the devotee to receive consecration into mantras, mandalas, visualizations, and icons.

As we saw in the discussion of the *Satvata-samhita* in chapter 8, the devotee first receives purification (*saucha*) from all sins through the "Man-lion Consecration" (*Narasima-diksha*) (*Satvata-samhita* 17; Smith 1975: 526–532). Once purified, he or she may then receive other consecrations. Most common,

it seems, was the "Single-Yet-Many Consecration" (*ekaneka-diksha*). By following the sadhana of devotion that follows, he or she may attain either emancipation (*kaivalya*), or wordly enjoyment (*bhoga*), or both (*Satvata-samhita* 16–23). As we shall see in the discussion of the south-facing panels in chapter 15, the purifying "Man-lion Consecration" was administered not only to Shudras but also to untouchables and outcastes.

The Story. According to Shuka, Narada worships Narayana as Man (Naranarayana) on Bharata at this very moment and teaches Pancharatra, samkhya, and yoga to the future Manu named Savarni (*BP* 5.19.10). Samkhya originated with the seer Kapila, who is the subject of the next panel. Narada's biography explains how he obtained that knowledge and became a singing bhaktiyogin (*BP* 7.15.69–73).

During the kalpa prior to our own, Narada had been a gandharva who loved women and song and drank too much. One day, surrounded by women and drunkenly singing love songs, he attended a sacrifice conducted by devas. They cursed him to be born deprived of beauty and power, in a low status appropriate to his behavior. He was therefore born as the son of a female servant of sages (*muni*) following the Doctrine of Veda (Vedavada).

Growing up in that context, Narada first heard of Krishna at age five. During a gathering of yogins during the four-month rain retreat, the five-year-old listened to them tell Krishna's story (*Krishnakatha*) (*BP* 1.5.23–31). Through that hearing, devotion grew, and Narada developed the loving clinging (*bhakti*) that produces humble, reverent, and self-controlled behavior. Seeing those symptoms, the yogins let Narada eat their leftovers, which purified his mind. At the three samdhya "junctions" of every day (sunrise, noon, sunset) he listened to them discuss Krishna, and the attachment (*bhakti*) that developed destroyed his passion and delusion. At the end of the rains the yogins gave the five-year-old their most secret knowledge, which Vasudeva himself had revealed.[6] It was the Pancharatra Agama with its doctrine of formations (*vyuha*) and the story of Krishna. Through it Narada came to understand the power of Vasudeva's maya and became a refugee at Vasudeva's feet.

Shuka told Parikshit that Narada learned how to use maya to transcend maya and how to get her on his side while experiencing death and birth (*BP* 1.5.32–40). When all one's intended acts (*karma*) are dedicated to Vasudeva, maya works positively. Even while enveloped by delusion that causes one to think of oneself as an actor who acts, one can use the deluding shroud to break out of it through a mere act of devoted insight and will. Dedication of deluded action to Vasudeva acts like medicine on the delusion itself, healing the disease that causes the painful symptoms of death and birth.[7] When performed in "unified consciousness during ritual performance" (*kriyayoga*), intended acts destroy themselves and a "unified consciousness clinging to Krishna" (*bhaktiyoga*) emerges.

Actions performed in bhaktiyoga keep the mind focused on Krishna's qualities and names, which are evoked by venerating Vasudeva Krishna, his elder brother Samkarshana Balarama, his son Pradyumna, and his grandson Aniruddha, all avatars of the four formations. When performing intentional acts (*karma*), the bhaktiyogin utters the mantra, "Veneration to the exalted Lord Vasudeva, and veneration to Pradyumna, to Aniruddha, and to Samkarshana" and offers the acts to Krishna. Not only is Krishna those four avatars, he is also the one without material form (*amurtika*) in the material form of the mantra (*mantramurti*) addressed to them. Through such consecrated acts the devotee will come to see the Person of the Sacrifice (*yajnapurusha*) perfectly (*BP* 1.5.32–38). As discussed previously, the Person of the Sacrifice takes the forms of Horsehead and Boar.

Narada, now a bhaktiyogin, stayed with his mother until a snake bit her and she died. Then he wandered north and sat under a pipal tree. "By myself (*atmana*)," he recalled, "I meditated on that Self (*atmanam*) within myself (*atmastham*) as I had been taught" (*BP* 1.6.16; also *BG* 6.5–32). Hari eventually appeared in the consciousness in his heart (*hridaya*); lost in joy, perception of "two" (*ubhaya*) disappeared and he entered the enstatic consciousness of samadhi (*BP* 1.6.17–18)

When Hari's form disappeared, samadhi ended. Nevertheless, through a bodiless voice Hari told Narada that such a vision will come again in another life, that he will never lose his memory of it whichever kalpa he is born into, and that he will become his personal attendant. As a bhaktiyogin focused on Krishna, Narada wandered and waited for death. At the end of that kalpa he was absorbed along with everything else. In this kalpa Narada was born through Brahma's lap, as befits his sensually passionate nature (*BP* 3.12.24).[8] He was Brahma's tenth son. The former Shudra was now a Brahmin and among his older brothers were the four Kumaras.

Narada lives in this kalpa firm in the practice of continence. He possesses a vina to accompany his singing and the ability to go anywhere he wishes unobstructed (*BP* 1.6.1–38, esp. 32–33). But he wanders ceaselessly, through all the worlds of Brahma's body and all the manvantaras of Brahma's daytime, because Daksha cursed Narada after he had persuaded Daksha's thousands of sons to renounce the world before they had begot progeny (*BP* 6.5, esp. 6.5.43).

In our manvantara, for example, at the end of the Dvapara Yuga prior to our own Kali Yuga, Narada appeared to Vyasa sitting alone on the banks of the Sarasvati River. Vyasa the Compiler had edited and divided Veda in preparation for the degeneration that Time inevitably brings to Bharata. He had also composed "for women, Shudras, and degenerates" a form of Veda they may hear, which is the *Mahabharata*. Vyasa was nevertheless dissatisfied. In his solitude on the river he sensed that he had not given due attention to the Bhagavata Dharma, which paramahamsa ascetics and the Immovable himself find dear. Narada appeared to him and confirmed his suspicion (*BP* 1.4.14–33).

Narada told Vyasa that he had not adequately described the Bhagavan's pure glory in the *Mahabharata* and that "any vision (*darshana*) that is incomplete does not please the Bhagavan." Vyasa had indeed expounded Veda and the four aims of human life (*purushartha*) exhaustively, but not Vasudeva's greatness. Literary works without Vasudeva's glory, Narada said, are to "supreme goose" (*paramahamsa*) ascetics merely mud puddles in which crows bathe. He told Vaysa to enter samadhi and recall the various acts of the wide-striding Lord, and to record them so that people may attain freedom from bondage (*BP* 1.5.13). "That will compensate for the mistake you made in the four newly divided Vedas when you described Vedic rites motivated by desire as Dharma, a sure trap for the ignorant."

Vyasa followed Narada's advice and used disciplined attachment to Krishna (*bhaktiyoga*) to unify his consciousness in samadhi and saw the Person and his maya in full. Out of that vision he composed the *Satvata-samhita* we know as the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 1.7.6). Listening to it will develop "loving attachment to the Dark One who is the Supreme Person," and will dispel all griefs, infatuations, and fears (*BP* 1.7.1–8). Vyasa revised the text carefully and taught it to his son Shuka. When Shuka taught it to the emperor Parikshit at his deathbed, the charioteer and bard (*shuta*) named Romaharshana heard it and later taught it to Saunaka and other seers at a thousand-year sacrifice in the Naimisa Forest. Shuta's version of the *Bhagavata Purana* is the one we know, but it is a highly expanded version of the original.[9]

The story of Narada's life in the previous kalpa as the son of a servant (Shudra) and his birth in this one as a son of Brahma (Brahmin) leads us to a Pancharatra text known as the *Satvata-samhita*. It is different from the *Satvata-samhita* that is the *Bhagavata Purana* recovered by Vyasa, and is also called the *Satvata-shastra* (Smith 1975: 514–536). As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Satvata-samhita* is included in the teachings of Fish to the Pandya king Satyavrata during the deluge after the previous kalpa; there it is called "the sankhya, yoga, and kriya of the divine *Purana-samhita*" (*BP* 8.24.55). The Pandyan Satyavrata was reborn in this kalpa through Surya the Sun as the now ruling Vaivasvata Manu named Shraddhadeva.

The *Satvata-samhita* begins by explaining how its teaching appeared in the Dravida region ruled by the Pandyas of Madurai. Vasudeva had taught it to Samkarshana in the Treta Yuga of the present kalpa, and he then passed it directly on to Narada. At the urging of Parashurama (Rama with the Axe) dwelling in the Malaya mountains (now called the Western Ghats, which divide Kerala from Tamilnadu), Narada taught the scripture to seers living in the region. Parashurama's connection to the story is significant, for his own story illustrates sadhanas that lead to enlightenment. Moreover, that origin story matches historical evidence of the Pancharatra Agama in Pandya and Chera courts in the early centuries CE (Hudson 1994).[10] The *Satvata-samhita* is

important to the design and the rites of this Vishnu-house and a brief outline of it now will be useful later.

Narada discussed six topics in the *Satvata-samhita*. After the origin story in chapter 1, he discussed the rules priests are to follow in puja to the icon of Vasudeva, or in the homa, when either is performed both for their own benefit (*svarthapuja*) and for the benefit of others (*pararthapuja*).[11] Fundamentally, that puja is the worship of the four formations as the manifestation of the One. That discussion constitutes chapters 2–6. Narada then discussed ascetic vows (*vrata*) that are addressed to the formations; the devotees may follow them according to their class and caste. That constitutes chapters 7–8. In chapters 9–13 Narada described the way mantras are to be used in the worship the avataras (*vibhava-devata*). It includes internal mental worship or external physical worship by means of the wheel-shaped mandala (*chakramandala*), or by means of a fire, or of water held in cupped hands. He described the way to construct mandalas, the way to fill them with Vasudeva's many forms, and the way to visualize those forms while reciting mantras. He then, in chapters 14 and 15, discussed the rites needed to purify oneself of sin at the end of the liturgical year.

Narada's final teachings directly relate to this Vishnu-house. In chapters 16–23 he began with the "Man-lion Consecration" (*Narasimha-diksha*), which purifies male and female devotees from all four classes who desire initiation into the puja they will perform only for their own benefit (*svarthapuja*). His discussion continues with the ceremonies of the "Single-Yet-Many Initiation" (*ekaneka-diksha*), the way of life (*sadhana*) that follows from it, and the way the consecrated devotee is to compose mantras for worship. In the final chapters 24 and 25, Narada discusses the context of worship: how temples are to be built and how they and the icon dwelling within them are to be consecrated.

THE PANEL. The rishi Naranarayana is a large royally dressed figure with a tall crown and two pairs of arms standing on the eastern side (Figure 13.3). He faces directly forward and looks slightly downward. His back pair of hands, not clearly visible, holds the discus and conch. His front right hand rests on his lower hip, and his left hand at the level of his chest forms a mudra too badly damaged to identify. The smaller figure of the rishi Narada, with one pair of arms and piled hair reaching to the Bhagavan's left shoulder, stands on the western side and gazes slightly upward. He holds the neck of his vina with his right hand and its round bottom with his left hand. Above him at the level of Naranarayana's face and crown are two faces gazing at this scene. One may be Narada's disciple Savarni, who will be the Manu of the next Manu Term. The other may represent the inhabitants of Bharata who follow the *varnashra-madharma*.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. First, the panel represents the region of Bharata on the Jambu continent, and its depiction of Narada in the presence of Nar-

anarayana on Bharata introduces the yoga of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*) with eleven restraints (*yama*) and twelve disciplines (*niyama*) (*BP* 11.19.33–35). Bhaktiyoga as a life of "service to the Bhagavan Who Bestows Emancipation" (*mukunda-seva*) is more relevant to people plagued by desire and greed than is the path of yoga alone (*BP* 1.7.36). It also portrays Narada as the ideal bhaktiyogin. By meditating on Vasudeva Krishna, by offering all intended acts to him, and by singing of his deeds and attributes, Narada rides in a boat sure to cross death and birth. Whenever Narada sings of God he feels him in his heart (*BP* 1.6.33–36).

Moreover, the panel signifies Narada's teaching of Bhagavata Dharma, which includes the following: 1) the story of Krishna or Krishnakatha; 2) the "most secret knowledge" or *jnana guhyatama*, which contains a mantra addressed to Vasudeva and his three vyuha formations during a sacrifice to the Person of Sacrifice (*BP* 1.5.23–38); 3) the *Pancharatra Upanishad*, which he learns from Narayana on White Island (*MBh* Shanti parvan 326; Ganguli 10: 132–142); 4) the *Satvata-samhita* (*SS*), which he learns from Samkarshana after Vasudeva has taught it to him (*SS* 1; 5) the *Jayakhya-samhita*, which he learns directly from the Bhagavan and then teaches to his disciple Shandilya (*JS* 1–2); and 6) the stanzas he and Tumburu sing in Brahma's presence about Ananta's material form of pure sattva holding the brahmanda as a minute particle on one of his thousands of hoods (*BP* 5.25.8–13). But Narada's disciple Savarni further connects him to 7) the *Devi Mahatmyam* as taught by the rishi Markandeya depicted ahead in Panel N5, and to 8) "The Ancient Collection" or *Purana-samhita*, which the Bhagavan in the shape of Matsya the Fish teaches to the Pandya king named Satyavrata during the deluge between this and the previous kalpa (*BP* 8.24). In this kalpa Satyavrata rules as the seventh Manu named Shraddhadeva, the son of Surya or Vaivasvata. His younger brother is Savarni, the disciple of Narada, who will succeed his elder brother as the eighth Manu (for Savarni's story, see *BP* 5.19.10; 8.1.19–22; and *DM* 1.1–46; 13.5–17).

Panel N3: Hari Announces Kapila's Birth to Kardama

In our discussion of the previous panel, we noted that Hari is one of the four material forms (*murti*) that the Knower-of-the-Field gave birth to through the womb of Matter. The others are the guru Narayana, the disciple Nara, and dark-skinned Vyasa born on an island (*Krisnadvaipayana*). Hari is Vishnu, the actor who measures out, pervades, and sustains the realm of spacetime. But like Samkarshana, Balarama, and the residents of White Island in the Ocean of Milk, here he is not dark but white skinned, for his color matches the purity (*sattva*) of the Plower formation and the Krita Yuga.

The panel is about the seer Kapila, a portion of Hari born to restore knowledge of the Self taught in samkhya (*BP* 3.24.36). Hari's portion appeared as Kapila through Kardama, the lord of progeny (*prajapati*) born from Brahma's shadow. The scene depicted here is the vision of himself Hari gave

to Kardama when Kardama asked for a wife. His subsequent marriage to Devahuti was the first of all marriages (*BP* 3.22.15; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 1.242).

THE STORY. Like his brother Daksha, Kardama had been ordered by his father Brahma to procreate. He went to the Bindusaras ashram on the Sarasvati River, where a tear from the Bhagavan's compassion had fallen to form a lake (*BP* 3.21.38). He performed tapas there for ten thousand years, serving Hari who gives boons to refugees clinging to him (*bhakti*) while yoked to enstasy (*samadhiyukta*) and disciplined in rites (*kriyayoga*) (*BP* 3.21.7). Hari was pleased and revealed himself there as white with white emblems (*BP* 3.24.1; Tagare 1976–1979 1: 353); in Tapasyananada's translation (1980–1982 1: 236–237): "Pure and sun-like in brilliance; wearing garlands with white and blue flowers; having blue and curly locks surrounding His forehead; wearing a yellow cloth; having a diadem and ear-rings; holding in his hands a conch, a discus, a mace, and a white play-lotus; having an expression and a smile on the face that bestow the highest joy on an onlooker; seated on the back of Garuda; having Sri on His chest and Kautstubha on His neck" (*BP* 3.21.9–12).

Kardama responded with a prayer asking for a wife with whom he could beget children (*BP* 3.21.13–21). Hari promised that two days later, the ruling Manu Svayambhuva and his wife Satarupa would come with their daughter Devahuti looking for a husband. They would give her to him as wife, and she would bear nine daughters who would marry other seers and have children. And, Hari concluded, "I, in a portion of myself, will be born of you and will compose a text on metaphysics (*tattva-samhita*)" (*BP* 3.21.32). The white Hari sitting on Garuda then disappeared.

Two days later, Svayambhuva Manu and his wife arrived with their daughter Devahuti. They offered her to Kardama. She, a Kshatriya, and he, a Brahmin, were members of the two classes who protect each other and through whom Hari protects the whole social order (*BP* 3.22.3–4). Kardama accepted her as his bride on the condition that after a child had been born, he would renounce the world and become a paramahamsa renunciant. They agreed. After the wedding, Svayambhuva and his wife returned to their capital (*BP* 3.22.21–39). Devahuti then served Kardama with such self-denying devotion that he gave her the gift of insight (*drishti*) even though they had not yet consummated their marriage (*BP* 3.23). But Devahuti, now knowing that her husband was pleased with her, asked Kardama to give her the sexual pleasure that would impregnate her with a child, and Kardama agreed. But as the ideal lover should, he made preparations for an elaborate honeymoon.

Kardama used his yogic power to create a multistoried and luxurious palace (*vimana*) that would travel anywhere they wanted. Accompanied by vidyadharis, the couple flew to the caverns of great Mount Meru, where a friend of Desire blows as a cool breeze. Kardama and Devehuta played and visited

there and in other regions around Meru and then went on a tour of the whole earth. Finally, they returned to the ashram for their first sexual union. The couple lay down on the bed inside the vimana and Kardama divided himself into nine forms. For a hundred years they played and embraced, until the ninefold Kardama finally emitted his seed into her. Devahuti gave birth to nine daughters that same day.

Kardama now wanted to renounce and wander, but Devahuti asked him for a son too. "To get a son," he said, "you should worship the supreme Person with faith," and she did (*BP* 3.24). Through Kardama's seed a portion of Hari passed into her womb and became Kapila. Brahma and various seers visited the ashram and were pleased to find that Kardama had fulfilled his command to procreate. Following Brahma's instructions, Kardama married his nine daughters to various seers, and all nine then went with their husbands to their respective ashrams (*BP* 3.24.22–25). Again ready to renounce, Kardama asked his son Kapila for permission, which he gave. Kardama left, and true to the meaning of "Vasudeva," eventually attained the vision of God in all things and of all things in God.

In the meantime, Kapila sat in the ashram without acting, and his mother Devahuti approached him for instruction (*BP* 3.25). "I take refuge in you," she said to her son, "because for refugees you are the axe that cuts the tree of samsara.[12] I want to know the nature of matter and soul from you, the greatest among those who know true Dharma" (*BP* 3.25.11). Kapila agreed to teach his mother the yoga that he had earlier taught to seers:

> Mental consciousness (*cheta*) is the cause of bondage and the cause of liberation. When free from defilements like desire and greed created by the sense of "I" and "mine," it becomes pure and is beyond sorrow and happiness. Then, by means of the discipline of knowledge, renunciation, and devotion, and by itself, the soul sees the isolated Self (*atmana kevala*) beyond matter—endless, self-luminous, subtle, indivisible, and uninvolved—and sees matter as powerless to bind it. Other than the discipline of clinging (*bhakti*) to the Bhagavan of all Selves, there is for yogins no auspicious path to the attainment of brahman.
>
> The wise say that attachment is the noose of the Self. But that same attachment is the door to emancipation when it is attachment to holy people. Such holy people have no attachments except to me, and attachment to them destroys all sins of attachment.
>
> Holy people always discuss my stories, and by listening to them, you will develop faith (*shraddha*), delight (*rati*), and clinging (*bhakti*). Then, because of clinging, disgust with the world will arise and you will seek to control thought (*chitta*) through the discipine of yoga, and you will follow the easy path of bhaktiyoga. By not enjoying the

> threads of matter, by developing knowledge through renunciation, and by generating clinging through a unified consciousness focused on me, you, the devotee, will attain me even here in this world. (*BP* 3.25.13–27)

Devahuti then asked her son, "Since I am a woman of slow understanding, please explain to me the nature of devotion suited to me. How may I attain nirvana easily? You are the embodiment of nirvana, what is the yoga that reaches the Bhagavan like an arrow?" (*BP* 3.25.28–30).

Out of love for her through whom he had appeared, Kapila began to teach Devahuti the categories of samkhya and the extensive bhaktiyoga. It was a long teaching and occupies eight chapters in Book Three of the *Bhagavata Purana* (3.25–33). He described a religious ideal developed further by Krishna in his lecture to Uddhava illustrated ahead by Panel S2. Kapila defined clinging or devotion (*bhakti*) as the disposition generated in Bhagavatas when the powers (*deva*) of the subtle body (*gunalinga*) and the gross body engaged in Vedic acts (*anusravika-karma*) are unified in a mind (*manas*) that is like sattva. That clinging consciousness burns up the sheath of ignorance (*BP* 3.25.32–33).[13]

When Kapila had finished his long instruction, Devahuti circumambulated him, prostrated, and praised him with wonder at the mystery: "How was it that he who stretches out on the waters and gives birth to Brahma in his lotus-navel was born in my womb? How was it that he who holds the universe in his stomach at the beginning, and appears as a baby sucking his toe on a banyan leaf floating on the waters at the end, was carried by me in my stomach too?" (*BP* 3.33.1–4).[14] Kapila told her to practice the easy path he had taught, for it leads one beyond samsara. With her permission, he left the ashram and walked toward the northeast, where Ocean (Samudra) eventually gave him a place where he could stay and enter samadhi (*BP* 3.33.33–35).

In the meantime, Devahuti practiced tapas at the ashram as her son had taught her (*BP* 3.33.12–32). Her grief at his departure made her think of him constantly, but since he was the Bhagavan, that grief set her mind free from any other attachment. She practiced the inner vision Kapila had taught, and an unbroken flow of love developed and led her into continous samadhi. She lost all sense of her body, but others at the ashram kept her alive by feeding her. So absorbed was she in God, and so given to tapas and yoga, that her hair was disheveled and her clothes blew off, and she did not notice that only her previous karma (*daiva*) now protected her. Through extinguishing in *brahman* (*brahmanirvana*) she attained the supreme Self (*BP* 3.33.30). The place of her success (*siddhi*) became famous as the Realm of Success (Siddhapada), and her body became a river that bestows success (*siddhi*) on the successful (*siddha*).

Subsequently, the seer Kapila, who was sitting quite still in the northeast, became involved in the dramatic story of Ganga's descent onto the mountains

and plains of Bharata. Her descent was part of the later history of the Solar Dynasty of Ayodhya (*BP* 9.8).

Once, Shuka told Parikshit, King Sagara ruled at Ayodhya. He had defeated the Talajanghas, Yavanas, Shakas, Haihayas, and Barbaras but did not slay them. Instead, he had them wear the peculiar modes of dress and tonsure by which they were known (as barbarians in the northwest by the second century BCE).[15] He then performed a horse sacrifice, during which Indra stole the wandering horse and hid it. Sagara sent his sons by his primary wife Sumati to find it. After they had dug all around looking for the horse, they finally saw it in the northeast, standing next to Kapila sitting in samadhi. Thinking him to be the horse thief who was only pretending, they raised their weapons to kill him, but instantly all burned up by a fire that emerged from their own bodies. Shuka then paused to comment on other tellings of the story—as found, for example, in the *Mahabharata* (3.94–108 in the critical edition) and in the Valmiki *Ramayana* (1.37–43): "The belief that Kapila's anger burned them up is wrong, for how can you attribute deluded anger to a person who is the abode of purity and whose Self purifies the moving universe? How can the sage who taught sankhya and is the Supreme Self see a difference between friend and foe?" (*BP* 9.8.1). We shall return to that "correction" later.

Sagara the king then sent the sons of his secondary wife Keshini to fetch the horse. Among those sons was Asamanjasa, who had been a great yogin in a previous birth and knew it. In order to avoid the attachment that had condemned him to rebirth in this life, he behaved insanely to create revulsion toward him in others. His father finally renounced him when he threw children into the Sarayu River to drown. Asamanjasa then brought the children back to life by the power (*bala*) derived from the sovereignty of his unified consciousness (*yoga-ishvarya*) and left for the forest. His son Amshuman went to look for the horse.

Amshuman traveled through the ditch that his father's half-brothers had dug and eventually found the horse standing near the heap of ash that had been his uncles (*BP* 9.8.20–31). Kapila was still sitting there. Amshuman bowed to Kapila with folded hands, adored him, and prayed to him as the Self of all beings who in order to teach has assumed a human form through maya. Kapila mentally blessed Amshuman and gave him permission to take the consecrated horse back to his grandfather. "But," he said, "these ashes of your uncles need to be purified and that can be done only by the waters of Ganga." Amshuman circumambulated the muni, prostrated, and returned with the horse to Sagara and helped him complete the sacrifice. At his end, Sagara turned his rule over to Amshuman, followed the instructions of his teacher Aurva, and attained liberation.

It was Amshuman's grandson, Bhagiratha, who finally purified the ancestral ash with Ganga's water (*BP* 9.9.1–15). He performed great tapas with Ganga in mind, and she appeared and offered him a boon. He wanted her to

purify his ancestors, he said, but she asked, "Who will bear my impact as I flow down to earth so I will not go all the way down to the realm of Taste (Rasatala)? Also, people will clean themselves of pollution in me; how will I become clean?" Bhagiratha replied: "Holy people (*sadhu*) who have renounced and are pacified and are established in *brahman* purify the world—they will destroy that pollution through the contact of their bodies, because Hari who destroys pollution dwells in them. Rudra is the Self of the body (*atman sharirin*) in whom the warp and woof of this universe is woven like cloth in its threads and it will bear your impact" (*BP* 9.9.6–7).

Bhagiratha then performed tapas to win Rudra Shiva's agreement (*BP* 9.9.8–15). Before long, Ganga, who was purified by the feet of Hari, flowed onto the head of Shiva and down to earth. Moving in his chariot like the wind, Bhagiratha led her to the ash heap of his ancestors, and as soon as Ganga touched it, Sagara's sons attained heaven. "How much more," Shuka then rhetorically asked Parikshit, "will that goddess (*devi*) give those who have faith (*sraddha*) and serve her with fixed vows?"

Rudra Shiva in the story illustrates his function as the directional deva (*digdevata*) of the northeast, where Kapila sits (*BP* 6.13.14 and 17–21) and near which this panel is located. The Pallavas, whose clan deity (*kuladeva*) was Shiva, claimed to purify earth through their rule in the way Ganga purified earth through her descent (Huntington 1985: 642 n 9). The story evokes the enormous rock-cut relief at Mamallapuram carved by Pallavas in the seventh century, which some have interpreted as depicting, among other things, the descent of Ganga (Huntington 1985: 303–304 and 642, nn 16–19).

Elements in Kapila's teachings are noteworthy. In the context of the Bhagavan as the indwelling Self of all beings who is the refuge beyond Time, Kapila described him as having faces in all directions. That matches the image of the Ordainer with four faces on Lokaloka portrayed in Panel W2, Figure 11.6), and evokes Arjuna's vision of Krishna in his highest form of sovereignty in *Bhagavad-gita* 11, where Vishnu as Time had faces in every direction (*BG* 11.11 and 32).

The connection of Kapila's teaching to the *Bhagavad-gita* is evident when it is read in the light of Krishna's long "Summary of the Brahman Doctrine" (*BP* 11.7–29) illustrated on the south side (Panel S2). Both teachings appear to explain the *Bhagavad-gita* within the context of temple worship. Kapila, for example, described the practice of inner vision (*dhyana*) at length (*BP* 3.28) and discussed the use of icons (*archa*) in worship; icons are necessary, he said, until the devotee knows God in the heart (*hridi*) and in all beings (*BP* 3.29, esp. 3.29.25).

Finally, let us consider Shuka's "correction" of the story. Aside from it, his telling matches those in the *Mahabharata* and in Valmiki's *Ramanaya*, which Kampar later developed into the Tamil *Ramayana* (1.9.33–61), and in the *Shiva Purana* (*Uma-samhita* 38). In those tellings it was Kapila's anger that burned

up the sons of Sagara. Shuka said that was incorrect, because Kapila could not have burned up Sagara's sons by his own anger since he was undefiled sattva. Because anger derives from passion and delusion, they must have burned up from their own passion and delusion, and Kapila merely provided the occasion. That "correction," along with the presumed dating of the "barbarians" to the second century BCE, reveals this Sagara episode to be an addition to Book Nine of the *Bhagavata Purana*.

The Panel. This badly stained panel depicts Hari's appearance to Kardama to announce the birth of a part of Himself as the rishi Kapila (Figure 13.4). Hari with two pairs of arms sits on the shoulders of Garuda. Both turn slightly eastward and tilt their tall crowns westward. Hari's back pair of hands holds the wheel and conch. His front left hand turns inward to his left breast, perhaps forming the padmanidhimudra signifying the lotus treasure: the left hand faces toward the right, the little finger stands up, the remaining fingers curl, and the tips of the forefinger and thumb touch (*PS* 1974: 24). His front right forearm is broken off, but appears to have stretched out toward the viewer, perhaps to hold a mace; its elbow rests on the inside of his right knee with his right foot on Garuda's right shoulder. His left leg hangs over Garuda's left shoulder and Garuda supports its foot with his left palm. A rope of three strands hangs from Hari's left shoulder across his chest and under his right arm.

Garuda has a human form with one pair of arms. His left hand holds his master's foot at the level of his waist, and his right arm bends upward to support Hari's right knee. Garuda's legs reveal that he is flying: His left leg stretches back to the west and his raised right knee points eastward. A thick rope hangs from his left shoulder across his chest and under his right arm. Three strands of what appear to be beads hang around his neck.

At the top of the panel are two damaged figures who face the viewer. The one on the east is destroyed. The one on the west, directly above Hari, raises his right hand up in a gesture of praise. His left hand at his chest forms what appears to be the tattvamudra: the palm faces the viewer, the tips of the forefinger and thumb touch, and the other fingers are relaxed (*PS* 1954: 72). At the bottom of the panel sit the four Kumaras with piles of matted hair. One Kumara sits on the bottom end of the vertical axis formed by Hari and Garuda, and raises his broken right hand up toward Hari in praise as his left hand rests on his hip. A second Kumara sits west of him, apparently forming the anjalimudra with his damaged hands. A third Kumara sits to the east in a posture mirroring the middle Kumara. The fourth Kumara stands behind him, hidden in the darkness.

The Panel's Meanings. The panel introduces the rishi Kapila as a part (*kala*) of the Bhagavan, and it represents his elaborate teachings of samkhya and yoga according to the bhaktiyoga of *Bhagavata Dharma* (*BP* 3.25–33). It also signifies an ideal concept of marriage for Bhagavatas: Sexual pleasure between husband

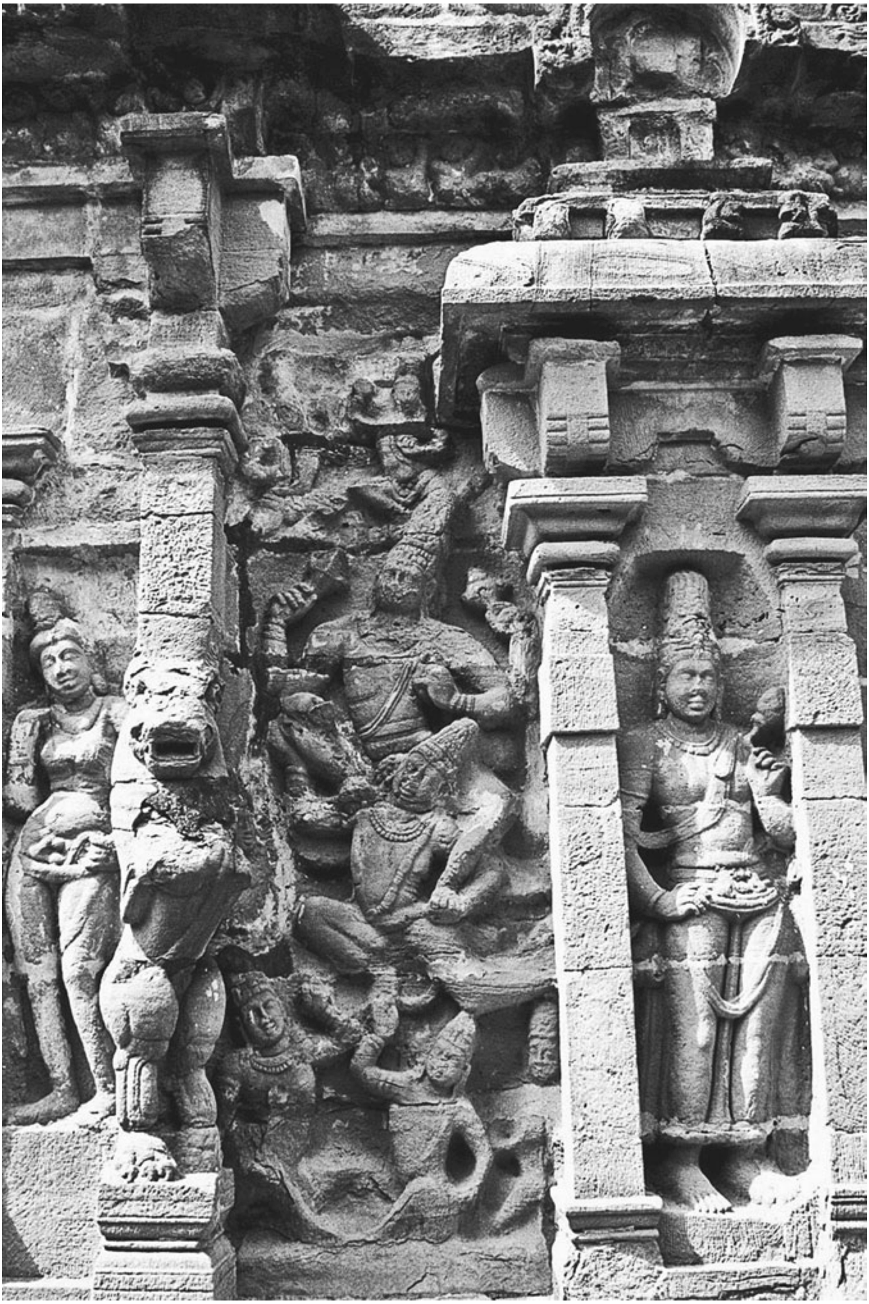


FIGURE 13.4. Panel N3: Hari announces Kapila's birth to Kardama. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

and wife is celebrated, but as the means for propagation. Otherwise it is an obstacle to bhaktiyoga. Finally, it alludes to the appearance on Bharata of the Ganga River, which is the paradigm for all material means of purification, and implies the purifying bath that begins the day.

Slit Opening to the Samkarshana Formation

Sculpted lions appear throughout the Vishnu-house and signify Shakti's presence as Slayer of the Buffalo Asura (Mahishasuramardini). Originally, we may assume, they had been infused with mantras embodying tejas to protect the Vishnu-house. Standing up on their hind legs on either side of this opening through which the Plower formation gazes (Figures 13.4, 13.5), their tejas would have deflected any demons attracted to site. The same pattern is repeated at slit openings for the formations on the east and south. At this one, however, female figures stand behind the lions on either side; male figures stand at the others. The females suggest the generative nature of Vasudeva's self-imposed inebriation in this first formation (Figure 13.4), and the males suggest the sovereignty and invincibility of the two formations that follow.

Panel N4: Hari Teaches Brahma the Supreme Secret of Omniscience

In this panel, Brahma receives instruction from Hari as Lord of Vaikuntha after he had received the vision illustrated in the first north-facing panel (Figure 13.1). Hari appeared enthroned, and tears flowed from Brahma's eyes, his body hairs stood on end, and he prostrated (*BP* 2.9.17–29). As a friend does to a friend, Hari took Brahma's hand and lifted him up to stand near him and talk, as illustrated here (*BP* 2.9.18 and 29).

The Story. Hari was pleased with Brahma's tapas, he said, because it is by tapas that he himself creates the universe, eats it, and sustains it. "Fierce tapas is my virya" (*BP* 2.9.23). He offered Brahma a boon, and Brahma asked for knowledge: "How may I understand the bodiless Bhagavan in forms both subtle and gross? How may I know how to carry out the task of emanating the universe? How may I not fall into the delusion that it is I, rather than the Bhagavan, who is One unborn?" Because Brahma awoke seemingly out of nowhere, he and others might think he was the primordial One from which all emanates. Indeed, according to Greg Bailey, many Brahma temples existed from ca. 400 BCE to 400 CE, and many must have believed Brahma to be the One. Today only one Brahma temple remains in worship, at Pushkar near Ajmer (Bailey 1983; Hudson 1986).

Hari responded to Brahma's request by teaching him the supreme secret of omniscience (*BP* 2.9.30–36). That doctrine, contained in four stanzas (*BP*

2.9.32–35), came to be known as the "*Bhagavatam* of Four Stanzas" (*Catuhshloki Bhagavatam*) (Tagare 1976–1979 1: 208 n). Stanza one teaches that the Bhagavan is all that exists before the universe appears, all that exists during its appearance, and all that exists after it disappears. Stanza two teaches that maya causes the universe to appear and hides the existing Self. Stanza three teaches that the Bhagavan transforms himself into all things, yet exists beyond them and is untouched by them. Stanza four teaches that the Self (*atman*) is the category (*tattva*) that persists through all those transformations and changes, yet suffers no diminution by them. That Self is what is to be known.

Hari told Brahma, "If you follow this teaching through all kalpas and yugas with supreme enstatic consciousness (*parama samadhi*), you will never be infatuated." Then he disappeared. Brahma saluted him with joined hands and began to emit all beings, just as he had in previous kalpas (*BP* 2.9.37–38).

Brahma's son Narada once came to him to learn about the maya of the Lord of Maya, and Brahma taught him the "ancient *Bhagavatam*" (*Bhagavatam puranam*) Hari had taught him (*BP* 2.9.39–45). But as a good teacher, Brahma turned those four terse stanzas into ten topics (*lakshana*) (*BP* 2.9.43): 1) the emanation of Brahma (*sarga*); 2) Brahma's emanation of the universe (*visarga*); 3) maintenance of order (*sthana*); 4) protection of refugees (*poshana*); 5) reigns of righteous living (*manvantara*); 6) the latent aspects of karma (*uti*); 7) stories of Hari's avatars and devotees (*ishakatha*); 8) withdrawal of the Self and its potencies (*shakti*) when the Bhagavan reclines (*nirodha*); 9) the Self's abandonment of other shapes (*rupa*) for its own shape (*svarupa*) in emancipation from samsara (*mukti*); and 10) the originator of emanation and dissolution known as the supreme *brahman* (*parambrahma*) and supreme Self (*paramatma*) and place of refuge (*ashraya*) (*BP* 2.10.1–9). Narada later passed that ancient *Bhagavatam* on to Vyasa, Vyasa passed it on to Shuka, and Shuka passed it on to the emperor Parikshit just before he died from snake bite (*BP* 12.13.18–23).

When Shuka explained the *Bhagavatam's* ten topics as Brahma had listed them (*BP* 2.10.1–9), he made an important hermeneutical point: By using shruti and artha, insightful sages (*mahatman*) explained the tenth topic—place of refuge (*ashraya*)—by means of the first nine. But what did Shuka mean by shruti and artha? Goswami translated *shruti* as the actual words of the text and *artha* as their purport (Goswami 1995 1: 125). Tapasyananda, however, translated *shruti* as the various hymns that describe the Bhagavan directly, and *artha* as the purport of the narratives that describe him indirectly (Tapasyanana 1980–1982 1: 134).[16] Tapasyananda's interpretation matches the way the *Bhagavata Purana* works in relation to the Vishnu-house: Direct description of Vasudeva's forms is found in its prayers, but the "formless" Bhagavan is the indirect meaning of all its many and complex narratives (*BP* 2.10.1–2).

Various teachers expanded the terse "*Bhagavatam* of Four Stanzas" for the sake of the student being taught. Samkarshana meditating on Vasudeva, for

example, taught the *Bhagavatam* to Sanatkumara (*BP* 3.8–4.31) as represented by the final panel on this wall, and that teaching already had a long history. When Krishna taught Uddhava the *Bhagavatam*, he said he had taught it to Brahma in the lotus during "my primordial emanation" (*BP* 3.4.13), which identifies it as the "*Bhagavatam* of Four Stanzas." Yet when Krishna taught it to Uddhava while Maitreya listened, it was much longer; and when Maitreya later taught Vidura what he had overheard, he added three chapters on cosmogony to it (*BP* 3.5–7). By now the four-stanza *Bhagavatam* filled up almost all of Books Three and Four of the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 3.5–4.31), and most of it is what Samkarshana taught to Sanatkumara.

Moreover, the *Bhagavatam* correlates with another scripture. Books Three and Four of the *Bhagavata Purana* spell out the implicit meaning of the "*Bhagavatam* of Four Stanzas" taught to Brahma in the lotus, which means they constitute a fully blossomed "Text of the Lotus" (*Padma-samhita*). Not surprisingly, that *Padma-samhita* correlates with the liturgies in the Pancharatra book called the *Padma-samhita*. Pancharatra liturgies and Bhagavata lore emerge from the same primordial lotus in which Brahma had been instructed at the kalpa's beginning. To make that origin explicit, the narrating Shuka was Brahma embodied (*BP* 12.13.21). Shuka's lengthy teaching of the *Bhagavatam* to the emperor Parikshit is therefore an authoritative expansion of the original "*Bhagavatam* of Four Stanzas" into the huge and complex, yet consistent, scripture illustrated by the Vishnu-house.

The Vishnu-house itself constitutes another expansive telling of the four-stanza *Bhagavatam*, but visually in three dimensions. Through their complex vision of the building as a book, its designers played skillfully with themes and allusions that move across, around, and up and down the Vishnu-house, just as they echo back and forth within the scripture. This north-facing panel, for example, contains allusions to two south-facing panels directly opposite. Hari standing here to teach Brahma parallels Krishna standing there to teach Uddhava (Panel S2), and Dattatreya standing there to teach King Yadu (Panel S3). Krishna teaches Uddhava the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine," which elaborates the "supreme secret" taught here and in the *Bhagavad-gita*; the latter is another example of a teacher standing to teach his student. Dattatreya taught Yadu the same "supreme secret" again, but it was the result of his experience and reasoning as an avadhuta. Krishna teaching Uddhava on the south, finally, alludes to the next panel here on the north and intentionally stands directly opposite it. When Krishna finished teaching the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine," he told Uddhava to go to the Badari ashram where Narayana and Nara live. The next panel in this north-facing sequence represents Badari's ashram.

The Panel. The large figure of Vasudeva, crowned and royally dressed, stands in the western two-thirds of the panel and faces directly north (Figure 13.5).

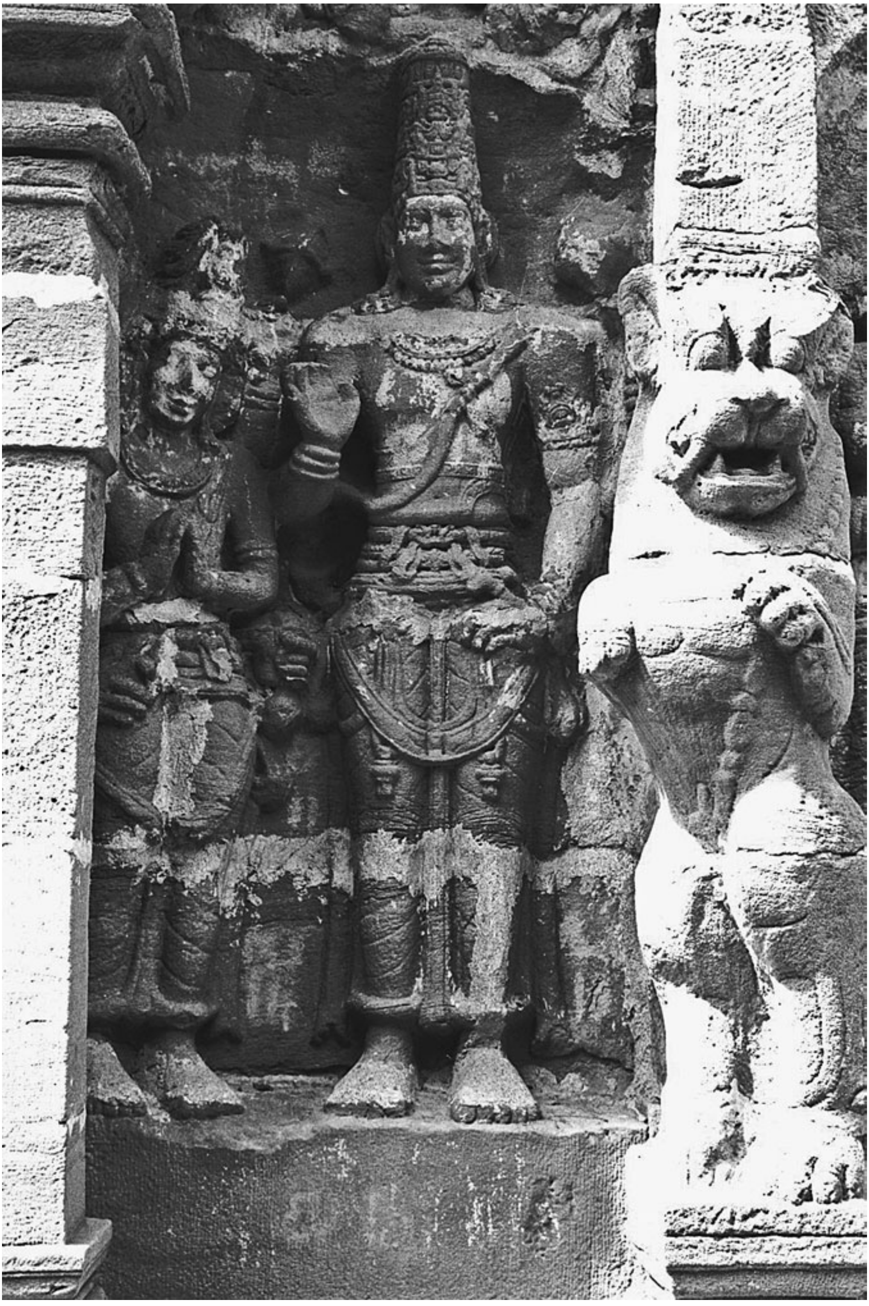


FIGURE 13.5. Panel N4: Hari teaches Brahma the supreme secret of omniscience. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

He has two pairs of arms. His hands in the back hold the wheel and conch. His front left hand rests on his left hip and thigh, and His front right hand forms the abhayamudra of protection at the level of his shoulder.

Brahma stands on the same level to Vasudeva's right. He has two pairs of arms and three faces. The two faces at the sides of his front face are damaged, but close inspection of the arrangement of his hair indicates their presence. Brahma tilts his head slightly westward and down, and has a slight smile as if listening intently with pleasure. His front pair of arms forms the anjalimudra. He rests his back right hand on his hip and thigh (mirroring Vasudeva's left hand), and with his back left hand near his hip holds what appears to be his broken water pot. Two unidentified figures sit at the top of the panel.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the essence of Bhagavata Dharma stated concisely in four stanzas (*BP* 2.9.32–35), and it signifies the scriptural development of this essence, beginning with Brahma's teaching his son Narada the "*Bhagavata Purana* of Ten Topics." Narada later teaches it to the rishi Vyasa at the end of the Dvapara Yuga as he sits on the banks of the Sarasvati River visualizing the Supreme *Brahman* (*BP* 2.9.40–2.10.47). This is approximately the *Shrimad Bhagavata Purana* we know today.

Panel N5: Markandeya Teaches about the Rishis Nara and Narayana

The Story. The twin rishis Narayana and Nara derive from a portion (*amsha*) of Naranarayana depicted in Panel N2. They are born during the first Manu Term through the master of progeny named Dharma and his wife Murti (*BP* 1.3.9; 2.7.6–7; 3.4.21–22; 4.1.53–59; 5.19.9–15; 11.4.6). The brothers go to the Badari ashram on the mountain range Gandhamadana northeast of Bharata (*BP* 5.16.10). There they practice severe tapas throughout the kalpa, maintaining absolute serenity and poise of mind to reveal the single Person whose maya creates the universe. Narayana is the guru who remembers and knows everything; and Nara is the disciple who forgets it all. For protection, devotees invoke the pair through the Narayanakavacha mantra. Narayana protects them from the destructive incantations of enemies and from listlessness, and Nara protects them from pride (*BP* 6.8.16).

Indra feels threatened by their tapas because he thinks Narayana is seeking the throne of Heaven (*BP* 11.4.7–16 and 2.7.6–7). He sends Kama and his company of sensual stimulators to Badari to destroy Narayana's tapas by arousing him, but Narayana knows why they have come, and to the wonder of Kama offers them ashram hospitality. Narayana lets them see some of the beautiful but invisible apsaras or courtesan dancers who attend him, and he asks them to choose one to take back to Indra. They select the famous Urvashi, who was born from Narayana's tapas, and they take her to Heaven.[17] Later on in the Tretra Yuga (represented ahead by the vimana's eastern side), Urvashi

will fall from Heaven through her love affair with the man Pururuvas; and their passionate desire will produce the three fires of the Vedic sacrifice (*BP* 9.14.40–49).

The rishi Markandeya, descendent of Bhrigu, is also born during the first Manu Term. He is a Vedic student of his father Mrikanda and dwells in an ashram on the slopes of the Himalayas where the Pushpabhadra River flows by the rock called Chitra, and is celibate for life and pacified. He wears matted hair, garments of bark, a deerskin, a sacred thread, a belt of kusha grass, a rosary of rudraksha beads and kusha grass, and carries a water jar and a staff. Morning and evening he worships Hari in the fire, the sun, the guru, Brahmins, and himself. He collects food as alms, offers it to his guru, and when permitted eats it silently. In this way he worships Hrishikesha, Lord of Senses, for countless years and conquers Death.

The first six Manu Terms of this Daytime of Boar pass during Markandeya's unified consciousness, and the seventh arrives. By now Indra is alarmed at the power his tapas has generated and sends Kama and his companions to interrupt it in the usual manner. An apsaras appears before the rishi and dances. As she plays with a ball the wind blows off her cloth and Kama shoots the yogin with his five arrows. Yet Markandeya does not stir. Terrified by this self-control, Kama flees with his entourage back to Heaven, and to Indra's astonishment. Hari in the form of the rishis Narayana and Nara appears to Markandeya to bless him: Narayana is black and Nara is white. Both are tall and have two pairs of arms. Both are dressed as consecrated patrons of a sacrifice and wear deerskin, tree bark, and a sacred thread of three strands. Both have a ring of kusha grass on a finger, a water pot, a bamboo staff, a rosary of lotus seeds, a whisk to brush away insects, and a fistful of grass.

Markandeya prostrates like a stick at their feet and with great emotion seats them, washes their feet, and adorns them with perfumes, incense, and garlands of flowers. He then praises them at length as the embodiment of emancipation (*moksha*): "Only this sattvika manifestation leads to eternal peace in emancipation, for your passionate (*rajasika*) and delusive (*tamasika*) manifestations are sources of misery, delusion, and fear. Those who follow the Pancharatra Agama (the Satvatas) say purity (*sattva*) is the shape of the Person (*Purusharupa*), and that his [Vaikuntha] world of sattva is attained only through purity (*sattva*). I venerate Narayana the seer and Hamsa the best of men" (*BP* 12.8.40–49).[18]

Nara's friend Narayana then offers Markandeya a boon (*BP* 12.9). Markandeya says he wants to experience the maya that causes the world and its protectors to think that true being (*sat*) is differentiated (*sad-bheda*) (*BP* 12.9.6). Narayana with Nara smile and say that Bhrigu's descendent would indeed experience it, and then return to Badari.

Markandeya continued to think of the promise as he worshiped the Bhagavan as immanent in fire, sun, moon, water, earth, air, sky, and Self. He

visualized him and worshiped him with visualized substances. His love (*prema*) was so great that sometimes he forgot to worship (*BP* 12.9.9). One day at twilight (*samdhya*), while Markandeya sat on the river bank meditating, a fantastic storm arose (*BP* 12.9.10–19). The ocean flooded earth, and its waters reached the sky, submerging all three worlds, all stars, and all planets. Markandeya was terrified and alone, drifting in the waters as if mad and blind, his matted hair hanging loose. He could see nothing in the darkness—no land, no sky, no directions. Hungry and thirsty, tossed and battered by fierce winds and waves, overcome with fatigue, bitten by animals who fought over him, his feelings ranged through grief, pleasure, fear, and dread. Hundreds of thousands of years seemed to pass. Vishnu's maya had caught him and the seer could not see.

Suddenly, Markandeya saw something, a banyan tree with new leaves and fruit standing on a summit of earth (*BP* 12.9.20–34). On its northeastern branch, he saw a shining infant lying in the middle of a leaf, a wondrous baby the color of a splendid emerald, sucking his foot. The sight soothed Markandeya's fatigue, and he approached the infant as his body hairs stood on end. But when he drew near, the baby inhaled Markandeya as if he were a mosquito, and the seer now saw the entire universe as it had been before. Everything was there inside the infant—the sky, earth, stars, mountains, oceans, continents, devas, asuras, forests, villages, rivers, cities, farms, cowherd settlements, the four classes and stages of life, the elements, the yugas, the kalpas, and Time. He saw the Himalaya and his own ashram, and even his fellow seers.

While he was observing all that, the baby suddenly exhaled him and Markandeya was back in the dark water, gazing at the infant resting on the banyan leaf and glancing at him with a sweet smile. Overwhelmed by feelings, Markandeya once again drew near to embrace the child, but he—the Ruler of Yoga Dwelling in the Cave—disappeared. Everything suddenly vanished, and Markandeya found himself at his own ashram. Markandeya now knew that he had experienced Narayana's Yogamaya, and took refuge in him. "O Hari," he said, "I am a refugee (*prapanna*) at the soles of the feet that free the refugee from great anxiety, for by your maya, those who appear wise are deluded by their own learning" (*BP* 12.10.1–2).

One day as Shiva and Devi passed in the sky over the Himalaya, they saw Markandeya below. Impressed with the perfect stillness of his practice, Devi asked Shiva to give him a boon. Shiva said that the Brahmin seer had no desire for boons, even for emancipation, for he had attained supreme attachment (*bhakti para*) to the Bhagavan. Nevertheless, Shiva said they should go down and talk to him, for association with holy people (*sadhu-samagama*) is the highest thing to obtain.

Shiva and Devi descended to Markandeya, who did not see them because he was absorbed in samadhi (*BP* 12.10.8–13). Shiva used his own yogamaya to get his attention, and entered the space within the cave (*guha-akasha*) of his

heart. He appeared there wearing a tiger skin and with reddish brown matted hair, three eyes, and ten arms with which he carried a trident, a khatvanga, a shield, a rosary of rudraksha beads, a damaru drum, a skull as a begging bowl, a sword, and a bow. Astonished to see that form in his heart (*hridi*), Markandeya emerged from samadhi to find out what had happened. As soon he saw the single guru of the three worlds with Uma, he prostrated and worshiped them with hospitality, saying "Veneration to you who are auspicious (*shiva*) and pacified, who as purity (*sattva*) gives joy to the world. Veneration to you who are passion (*rajas*), and to you who are delusion (*tamas*), but without fierceness (*aghora*)" (*BP* 12.10.17).

The narrating shuta said that Shiva, "who is the Primordial God and goal of the sants" was pleased (*BP* 12.10.18) and responded as if he were all three members of the trimurti, Vishnu, Brahma, and Rudra: "Ask whatever boon you want, for we three are the lords of those who give boons. All the worlds and the protectors of the worlds honor and worship Brahmins who are holy persons (*sadhu*), pacified, without attachments, beneficent to all beings, clinging to only one god (*ekantabhakta*), free from antagonism, and looking on all equally. So do I, as do Bhagavan Brahma and the ruling Hari himself (*BP* 12.10.20–21). Such people do not see the slightest difference between me, the Immovable, and the Unborn Brahma, nor between oneself and other people, and we honor you (*BP* 12.10.11). Tirthas and images of devas purify after a long time, but holy people purify on sight. Veneration to the Brahmins who use samadhi, tapas, devout study, and self-control to hold us in the shape (*rupa*) of three Vedas. Just from hearing of you and seeing you great sinners (*mahapatakin*) and even the lowest castes (*antyaja*) attain purity, so imagine what will result from talking with you."

Shiva's words relieved Markandeya of the distress he felt from Vishnu's maya (*BP* 12.10.35–37). "It is a puzzling play of the Lord when rulers venerate those they rule," he noted. After further comment Markandeya asked that he might have attachment (*bhakti*) to the Immovable Bhagavan, to Shiva, and to his devotees (*BP* 12.10.34). With Devi's agreement, Shiva granted his request before they left: "You will have devotion, you will have freedom from old age and death to the end of the kalpa, you will have knowledge of the past, present, and future, and you will be an acharya of the Puranas."

The shuta concluded the story by noting that the famous and great yogin Markandeya moves about the universe to this day. His experience of the deluge created through maya had seemed to him to have lasted seven kalpas and some have misunderstood that, he explained. They erroneously think the deluge was the deluge that occurs at the end of Brahma's day and that Markandeya has lived for seven kalpas.

The version of the story that the shuta "corrected" appears in "The Session with Markandeya" in the *Mahabharata* (3.179–221; van Buitenen 2: 567–664; the baby on the banyan leaf appears in 3.186–187). According to that telling,

Markandeya did survive the deluge before this kalpa, which was why he was able to identify the baby he had seen on the banyan leaf as Krishna who is Narayana himself (*Mbh* 3.187.50–55). The shuta's "correction," however, fits the story into a consistent view of time: No one on earth, not even Markandeya, will escape being eaten by the Bhagavan when Rudra Shiva emerges from the Plower formation as Brahma goes to sleep. The "correction" also reveals the later age of Book Twelve.

Shiva's boon that Markandeya will be an acharya of the Puranas refers to the *Markandeya Purana*, which contains three stories relevant to this context. One is a story about Harishchandra, whom Shuka briefly introduced in his history of the Solar Dynasty (*BP* 9.7.7–27). The story develops his fame for faithfulness to truth and for giving (*MP* 4–9). Another is about Dattatreya (*MP* 16–19; 36–44), who appears in the first panel on the south-facing side. The third is Markandeya's famous "Glorification of the Goddess" (*Devi Mahatmyam*), which celebrates Narayana's Yoganidra, "Sleep of Unified Consciousness" (*MP* 81–93). She emerged within spacetime first as the Goddess Chandika Durga and then as Gauri, and her anger appeared as Kali. She became Parvati, True Wife (Sati) reborn to be Shiva's wife. As we have noted, Goddess Chandika Durga appears nowhere on the Vishnu-house. She is present only as Slayer of the Buffalo Asura in her lion, sculpted all around the temple. Apparently, the consecrating unction (*abhisheka*) of the palace (*vimana*) implanted brilliant conquering power into the brick, stone, and paint of the lions that guard the "skin" of God's body.[19]

THE PANEL. The upper and larger portion of the panel depicts the Badari ashram on the Gandhamadana mountain range to the northeast (Figure 13.6).[20] The seer Narayana with two pairs of arms sits on a platform in the center of the eastern two-thirds of the panel. His head tilts slightly to the west and his piled-up hair resembles a crown. His stretched earlobes touch his shoulder with an object hanging at their ends. He faces forward, but gazes slightly downward toward the standing figure of Nara at his left. His back pair of hands holds the wheel and conch; the latter is clearly visible but the former is not. His front left arm has been broken off. His front right arm bends at the elbow and his hand forms the jnanamudra at the level of his chest: the thumb folds over three fingers and the little finger is raised up (*PS* 1974: 73). Narayana's knees bend and his shins cross, the right in front of the left.

The disciple Nara stands on the western side of the panel, his feet at its bottom and his hips at the level of the platform on which Narayana sits. He too has hair piled up to look like a crown, two stretched earlobes with something at the end touching his shoulders, and two pairs of arms, which are not immediately obvious. His front two hands hold the anjalimudra. His back left hand rests on his left thigh, but the arm is hidden behind the adjacent pillar. His back right arm is not visible, but the curled fingers of his right hand appear



FIGURE 13.6. Panel N5: Markandeya teaches about the rishis Nara and Narayana. AIIS.

above Narayana's left thigh. Nara wears two strands of beads around his neck, three strands of rope around his left front wrists, and a rope hanging from his left shoulder across his chest and under his right arm.

The portion of the panel beneath Narayana's platform depicts Markandeya's ashram at Pushpabhadra. Markandeya, with two arms and matted hair encircling his head, sits at the panel's center in a posture resembling Narayana's above. His left hand is directly in front of Nara's right knee; its thumb and forefinger touch and the remaining fingers rise up to form the mudra known as buddha, or tattva, or jnana (*PS* 1974: nos. 55 and 72). His right hand at the level of his chest is damaged. He wears a single strand of rudraksha beads around his neck, two ropes around his left upper arm, three around his left wrist, and perhaps three around his right forearm. Strands of rope hang from his left shoulder under his right arm, and the end of a cloth appears to hang over his left shoulder. To his right and slightly behind him sits another ascetic, who looks toward him as he listens to the lesson illustrated above by the larger figures of Narayana and Nara. The disciple is probably Vyasa's disciple Jaimini, who wants to understand the origins of his guru's *Mahabharata*. Markandeya explains its origins to him in the first forty-four chapters of his *Markandeya Purana*, where he refers to Narayana as Vasudeva with three vyuha formations (ch. 4) And he begins it the way Vyasa begins his *Mahabharata*, with the invocation of the rishis Narayana and Nara, as depicted above.

Above the head of Nara and to the west of Narayana's head and crown flies a figure forming the anjalimudra. His head may have either a crown or a tall pile of hair encircled by a halo; perhaps it is Soma the Moon. Above Narayana's crown to the east appears the face of a second figure, badly damaged, also with a halo; perhaps he is Surya the Sun. Directly over Narayana 's head is the torso and head of a third figure. The face of a fourth may be to his left.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The Badari ashram is located in the northeast, as is this panel. Narayana and Nara are visual illustrations of the literal meaning of the eight-syllable mantra "*Om*, veneration to Narayana" (*Om namo narayanaya*): Nara the disciple who forgets venerates Narayana the guru who remembers. They are dual manifestations of the single Narayana, and models of the guru and disciple. Here, as at Badari, they portray satsanga, "association (*sanga*) with those who have true being (*sat*)." Devotees like Uddhava and Narada associate with them by living at their ashram and serving them. Kapila introduced satsanga in the panel before this one, and the theme appears throughout the *Bhagavata Purana*, whose condensed origin the panel before that one recorded. Krishna explained satsanga more fully in the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" represented by the south-facing panel directly opposite (Panel S2).

Satsanga means that devotees who seek to gain the direct sight of Krishna in this life will live around those who already perceive him, the "supreme Bhagavatas" (*parama-bhagavata*) who live only to serve him and do not desire even emancipation from birth and death (*moksha*). They are the sants who talk about Krishna all the time. By listening to them talk, Krishna's story enters the devotees' mind through the ears and eventually produces ardent desire for him, which causes them to seek direct perception of him. That is why Krishna told Uddhava to go to Badari; there he will gain direct perception of him after his human form had "died."

This pair as the embodiment of desire's pacification in the Krita Yuga alludes ahead to desire inflamed in the Treta Yuga by the apsaras Urvashi, who emerged from tapas of Narayana and Nara (*BP* 2.7.6). She will become the lover of Pururuvas of the Lunar Dynasty, and their passion will produce the fire of the Vedic sacrifice in the Treta Yuga represented by the eastern side (*BP* 2.7.6–7; 5.19.1–15; 9.1.34–35; 9.14.15–49; 11.4.7–16). Moreover, as guru and disciple Nara and Narayana allude further ahead to the southern side's Dvapara Yuga, when "Narayana, the ancient friend of Nara" appears as Krishna, and his forgetful disciple Nara appears as Arjuna (*BP* 10.69.16; *BG* 4.5).

Markandeya in the panel also represents the *Markandeya Purana*, which consists of two parts. Shiva said Markandeya would be an acharya of the puranas, and he appears in the panel teaching Jaimini the purana's first part (*MP* 1–44). This part includes: 1) the story of Harishchandra, famous for faithfulness to truth and for giving; and 2) the story of Dattatreya, who appears in Panels S1 and S). Markandeya teaches the purana's second part to his disciple Kraushtuki (*MP* 45–137). This "purana" had issued from Brahma's mouths along with the Vedas. Bhrigu heard it and taught it to Daksha, and Daksha taught it to Markandeya (*MP* 45.20–136).

Furthermore, Markandeya is depicted wearing rudraksha beads in the manner of Shaivas. This refers to his encounter with Shiva in his heart, and perhaps to a belief that Markandeya is an ardent devotee of Shiva. On a cosmic scale, the apparent appearance of Soma and Surya in this panel alludes to the duration of this Daytime of Boar—"as long as the sun and moon exist"—and to the continued presence in it of the rishis Narayana, Nara, and Markandeya.

We earlier noted a parallel between this panel's portrayal of Narayana and Markandeya: Both are teachers, who sit in similar postures; both form mudras with similar meanings but with opposite hands, and their listeners are on opposite sides. There is a similar parallel in their respective stories: Both were the subjects of Indra's jealousy, both were attacked by Kama and his companions, and both were unmoved by it. Those attempts at sexual arousal anticipate panels that lie ahead. The apsaras dancing, playing ball, and losing her garment in front of Markandeya appears again in the stories of another twilight (Panel E3) and of Mohini (Panel S6). The apsaras Urvashi anticipates the story of Pururuvas (Panel E1), and Harishchandra anticipates the theme of extreme

self-giving in stories connected with Dattatreya (Panels S1 and S3). Goddesses Chandika Durga and Bhadrakali anticipate the prayogic rites of the south side (Panels S4, S5, S6). They also point to the earlier Goddess temple that stood at Kanchipuram's center, since moved to become her residence as Goddess Kamakshi, known also as Lalita.[21] The Markandeya story similarly points to Rajasimha's grand Shiva temple across the city, but the story's subordination of Shiva to Narayana subordinates that older imperial structure to this one newly built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

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14

The Vimana Panels on the Eastern Side

The panels on the eastern side of the vimana illustrate the virya action and the aishvarya sovereignty of Pradyumna, Vasudeva's second and Pre-eminently Mighty formation. This formation, based on the self-delusion of Samkarshana the Plower, expresses the passion propelling Vasudeva's emanation of directional space and chronological time through Brahma.

Of matter's three "threads" (*guna*), the east-facing panels illustrate rajas, the passion that accounts for desire (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), and deed (*karma*). When a sense of "I" and "mine" motivates action, it is generative (*pravritti*) and moves the actor forward within chronological time. When the sense of "I" and "mine" is removed from action, it is nongenerative (*nivritti*) and leads the actor out of chronological time. Nivritti as the solution to pravritti is the subject of the east-facing panels.

The panels continue Brahma's waking day begun by the north-facing panels. Brahma's day-and-night is the paradigm for the human day-and-night, which begins at night's end (4–6 a.m.). Daytime begins at sunrise (6–8 a.m.), which falls at the vimana's northeast corner and reaches its midday zenith (12–2 p.m.) at its southeast corner.

In the terms of the solar year as a day-and-night, the northeast corner panel denotes the winter solstice, which begins the light half of the year and the Tamil month of Tai (Pushya). The following two panels denote the month of Machi (Magha). The next two panels denote the last month of the year known as Pankuni (Phalguna). The panel at the southeast corner begins the cycle anew with the first month of the year known as Chittirai (Chitra, Chaitra). Of Bharata's

four ages (*yuga*), this side illustrates the Treta Yuga, symbolized by the number three.

The panels sculpted at the corners of this side are divided into two parts, signaling that this is Vasudeva's second formation. Of the four panels they bracket, the two north of the central opening illustrate virya and the two south of it illustrate aishvarya. We shall begin with the two corner panels.

The Two Corner Panels

Panel E1: Brahma Worshiped on the Continent of Pushkara and His Four Kumara Sons

The Story. The seventh continent on the outer edge of Earth is called Pushkara, "Blue Water Lily" or "Blue Lotus Blossom." Beyond it, on the other side of a huge expanse of pure water, is Lokaloka, illustrated by Panel W2. The Pushkara continent is divided into two regions by the mountain range called Manasottara, "Beyond the Mind." On this mountain is Indra's city Devadhani to the east of Mount Meru, Yama's city Samyamani to the south, Varuna's city Nimlochani to the west, and Soma's city Vibhavari to the north (*BP* 5.21.7). One wheel of Surya's chariot runs along the top of this mountain (*BP* 5.22.13). Surya measures the year (*samvatsara* or *vatsara*) in a cycle divided into the day-and-night of devas and asuras.

Ramanaka and Dhataki, the two sons of Priyavarta's son Vitihotra, rule these regions where the Blue Lotus Blossom, with thousands of petals shining like flames, serves as the throne of the Bhagavan in the shape of Brahma. This body of Brahma is constructed of karma or ritual action and has only one head and face; he passes this form on to the Manus as the paradigm of the human male who is qualified to perform kriya or ceremony (*BP* 5.20.29–33). Brahma uses this single-faced body, its shadow, and its reflection to populate the brahmanda he creates (*BP* 3.20.12–53). In contrast to Brahma's passionate creativity, his first-born Kumara sons Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanatkumara are established in knowledge of the atman, are chaste, and are completely devoted to Vasudeva (BP 3.12.4–7).

The Panel. The panel is divided horizontally into two unequal portions (Figure 14.1). The upper two-thirds portray the Bhagavan in the shape of Brahma standing behind the closed blossom of the brilliantly shining Blue Lotus that gives the continent its name. Surya is rising over the horizon and the blossom bends eastward toward him and begins to open. The panel's vertical axis bifurcates Brahma's body from the top of his crown down through the middle of the lotus to divide Brahma's four sons sitting below into two pairs. Brahma is dressed royally, wears a tall crown and faces directly east toward the viewer, but his body from the thighs down is hidden behind his lotus-blossom



FIGURE 14.1. Panel E1: Brahma worshiped on the continent of Pushkara and his four Kumara sons. AIIS.

throne. He has two pairs of arms. His back pair of hands rests on his hips. The forearms and hands of his front pair are missing, but appear to have held the anjalimudra at the center of his chest.

Four male figures are arranged vertically on each side of Brahma and the lotus blossom. Two small figures above stand at Brahma's shoulders facing forward. The figure on the south raises his left arm and bends his open palm in

praise toward Brahma's face. Presumably the badly damaged figure on the north side mirrors this gesture. Two larger figures turned slightly toward Brahma at his torso and legs may be the rulers Ramanaka and Dhataki, although they appear to be flying. The figure on the south points the knee of his bent left leg northward as he stretches his right leg to the south, and stretches his right arm back parallel with it. He raises his left arm, presumably in a gesture of praise with his missing left hand. The figure on the north mirrors this posture. Two much smaller figures below fly at the sides of the lotus with similar gestures of praise.

The bottom third of the panel portrays the four Kumara sons of Brahma. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and Sanatkumara sit on the same level, two on each side of the vertical axis running down from the top of Brahma's crown, each pair slightly turned toward the middle. They sit mirrored with legs crossed, and may be nude or may wear loincloths that are not visible. All four have piled matted hair, long earlobes touching their shoulders, one pair of arms, and damaged hands at the waist. In the order of their birth, Sanaka the elder sits at Brahma's extreme right (south), and to his left sits Sanandana, who raises his open left palm to gesture toward the scene above. Sanatana follows him, and Sanatkumara as the youngest ends the sequence at Brahma's extreme left (north).

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This corner panel represents Pushkaradvipa, the Continent of the Blue Lotus Blossom, the outermost of Earth's seven circular continents. Its mountain range Manasottara, "Beyond the Mind," identifies this continent as the boundary of Brahma's mental activity during his Daytime of Boar. It also respresents Surya appearing in the east to begin Brahma's morning, and morning on Bharata.

The horizontal division between Brahma above and his four Kumara sons below represent Brahma's creative passion and the Kumaras' nonclinging consciousness, both focused eastward toward Vasudeva as the Person to whom morning sacrifices are offered. This combination of action impelled by passion and nonclinging consciousness signifies virya, the ability to act without clinging to the action and its consequences, a function of the sovereignty represented at the southeast corner by Panel E6.

Panel E6: Bhava on Kailasa Venerates Pradyumna

THE STORY. The scene is Mount Kailasa in the central region of our Jambu continent, which is called Ilavrita. At Ilavrita's center stands Mount Meru, at whose center is Brahma's square city surrounded in the cardinal and intermediate directions by the eight Lokapala world protectors (*BP* 5.16.28–29). It is perpetually midday on Mount Meru (*BP* 5.21.8); and the end of morning at midday is the period of time this panel signifies. Mount Meru is surrounded on

its four sides by eight mountains, one of which is Kailasa; it stands south of Meru to the east, and southeast is the location of this panel.

Shiva resides on Kailasa with the name Bhava (Coming into Being), which suggests his creative use by the Pre-eminently Mighty formation, with his consort there, the Goddess Bhavani. On Kailasa, Shiva teaches seers sitting around him under a banyan tree (*BP* 4.6.8–38), and among his teachings is the prayer known as Yogadesha (*BP* 4.24.32–79); known also as the Rudra-gita, Brahma had taught it to Bhrigu and others born of himself for procreation (*BP* 4.24.72–73). It is to be recited when starting off in the morning (*BP* 4.24.28). Shiva also entertains Devi with the vast collection of tales called "The Ocean of the Streams of Story" (*Kathasaritsagara*). Nevertheless, on Kailasa Shiva worships the Plower as he appears in Patala, not the Pre-eminently Mighty as depicted here. We shall leave that fact to the end of the discussion. Let us first consider the story of Shiva's Ilavarta-varsha (Region that Changes Ila). Appropriate to Chittirai (Chitra, Chaitra), the first month of the lunar-solar year (*samvatsara*), Ila's story tells the origins of the Lunar Dynasty in the west at Hastinapura and the Solar Dynasty in the east at Ayodhya.

Rama tells Lakshmana the story of Ila in the *Ramayana*'s final book to introduce the horse sacrifice (*Ram* 7.87–90). There Ila is the son of Kardama, ruler of Bahlika, and the event of the male Ila becoming female takes place during the "charming month of Chaitra." Thereafter, Ila is male one month and female the next. Eventually, through a horse sacrifice addressed to Shiva, Ila's form as male is made permanent. Shuta also tells the story in Book Nine of the *Bhagavata Purana* to introduce the Solar and Lunar Dynasties, and we shall follow his telling.

According to Shuta (*BP* 9.1.13–42), the "Manu Son of Sun" named Shraddhadeva sponsored a single sacrifice to both Mitra (ruler of daytime) and Varuna (ruler of nighttime) to gain a son. Vasishtha supervised the rites as the *brahman* priest. Shraddhadeva's wife Shraddha, however, wanted a daughter, and the hotri priest followed her will in the *Rig Veda* mantras. Thus was born their daughter named Ila. Manu persuaded Vasishtha to appeal to Hari the Ruler to change Ila into a male, which he did. Ila then became Sudyumna.

One day after the male Sudyumna had matured, he and followers rode horses into the region around Meru, where Shiva dwells with Devi. Immediately—due to Shiva's previous command that he be the only male there—all the males became females, including the horses. Sudyumna was again Ila. Nevertheless, she continued wandering and came to the ashram of Moon's son, Budha (Mercury). Budha longed for her and she for him; they produced a son named Pururavas. When Pururavas matured, he and the apsaras named Urvashi produced Moon's descendents to rule Varuna's nighttime. That was the Lunar Dynasty in the western region of Kurukshetra, whose capital was Hastinapura on the Yamuna River.

Afterward, Vasishtha asked Shiva to restore the female Ila to the male Sudyumna, and he agreed with this stipulation: One month Sudyumna would be a man and one month a woman. Sudyumna-Ila ruled that way long enough to produce three sons who ruled in the southern region (*daksinapatha*). Then Sudyumna-Ila left the throne for the forest. In the meantime, the Vaivasvata Manu and his wife had ten sons, the eldest of whom was Ikshvaku. He produced Sun's descendents to rule Mitra's daytime. That was the Solar Dynasty in the eastern region of Kosala, whose capital was Ayodhya.

Shuka began his description of the Ilavrita region (*BP* 5.17) with the story of Dwarf and Ganga's descent, as discussed above in the introduction to part III. When Dwarf's left toenail makes a hole in the edge of spacetime, Ganga emerges through it to flow over his foot onto the region of Dhruva. Dhruva rejoices in the water flowing from the foot of his clan deity (*kuladeva*) and sprinkles her on his head. From there she descends onto the matted hair of the Seven Seers, from there through the path of devas to the world of Moon, and from there onto the city of Brahma on mount Meru, flowing in the cardinal directions down Meru's four sides. Ganga's southward course flows through Bharata.

Shuka's story of Ganga's descent reminds us that the east-facing panels signify energetic (*rajasika*) activity on Earth, the central and densest layer of Brahma's body. The hole in the boundary of Brahma's body through which Ganga flows corresponds on Earth to the continent of Pushkara, which the first panel illustrates (Panel E1). Ganga flows from there onto Dhruva, which the next panel represents (Panel E2). The remaining panels portray other illustrations of rajasika activity under Dhruva, including Brahma's creation of asuras and the Bhagavan's descents to battle them.

Shuka omitted the familiar story of Shiva breaking Ganga's fall by letting her fall on his head, a story frequently depicted in other Pallava temples and already discussed in connection with the seer Kapila (Panel N3). If we add it to this panel, it repeats Shiva's subordination to the Bhagavan, for Shiva receives on his head the water flowing over Dwarf's foot. Moreover, it invokes Brahma at the other corner, for Shiva needed Ganga's waters to purify him as Bhairava from the sin of cutting off Brahma's fifth head, which he then had to carry, as the seer Markandeya saw while in samadhi (*BP* 12.10.11–13).[1] Shiva gazing at the Bhagavan here is Shiva purified of decapitating Brahma there.

The poet Poykai, who lived in the Pallava domain, added the story of Gajendra to those stories in *Tirunvantati* 97:

O mighty warrior
Gracious to the elephant
Attached to his mate,
Shiva joined your feet

And received grace too,
Did he not?
Smeared with ash
He joined his beautiful hands
In oblations to Fire
As Ganga plunged into his matted locks
Adorning them famously with her glitter.

Shiva needed purification because he had cut off Brahma's fifth head. To atone for grievous brahmanicide (*brahmahatya*), he performed a fearful ritual requiring him to wander begging with the skull of Brahma, to smear himself with the ash of human corpses, and to offer pieces of his own body into Fire. He was not freed from the sin, however, until he followed Gajendra's lead and took refuge in the Bhagavan as true recipient of all fire offerings. The Bhagavan then let Ganga fall onto Shiva's head and purify him. Her glittering presence in his matted hair thus reminds us that Shiva is the Bhagavan's dependent.

When Shuka finished the story of Ganga, he described each of the nine regions of Jambu, beginning with Ilavrita at the center. The formation Shiva worships in Ilavrita is Samkarshana the Plower, the delusive formation from which Shiva himself derives. Shiva perceives Samkarshana in samadhi and prays to him (*BP* 5.17.16). His prayer in Ilavrita correlates remarkably with another stanza from Poykai's Tamil antati poem (above) and this panel's position at the southeastern corner. Shiva's prayer, moreover, summarizes the corner panels of the vimana already noted and anticipates those to come.

Shiva began by addressing the Bhagavan as the Lord who ends bondage for his devotees and continues it for others, all the while unaffected by the threads of his own creativity (*mayaguna*) (*BP* 5.17.17–19). That refers to Vaikunthanatha as depicted by Panel N1. Shiva then described a form dominated by delusion (*tamas*), which the Bhagavan created for those who do not perceive him clearly. He has reddened eyes, he is drunk on liquor, he stimulates naga women erotically when they touch his feet, and he bears the realm of Earth (*bhumandala*), the size of a mustard seed, somewhere in his hoods (*BP* 5.17.20–21). That refers to Samkarshana in Patala as portrayed by Panel N6.

Shiva then described Vasudeva's intelligence (*mahat*); by thinking the thought "I," intelligence becomes Brahma. That refers to Brahma with the lotus as portrayed by Panel E1. Shiva then acknowledged that he emerged from Brahma and brought into being the sense organs that function at the center of the universe, notably on Jambu in the region of Bharata (*BP* 5.17.22). That refers to Shiva's appearance in this corner panel. Brahma at the north and Shiva at the south illustrate the beginning and end, as the Pre-eminently Mighty formation determines them from the center.

Shiva's prayer then alluded forward to the south-facing panel around the corner from this one (Panel S1). Brahma and Shiva sit on either side of Vishnu,

but in the respectively transformed guises of Soma the Moon and the seer Durvasas sitting with Datta the son of Atri (Dattatreya) in the middle. Shiva noted that, like birds tied with strings he holds, the Bhagavan controls all beings within spacetime, including Brahma and himself. As his central position declares, all things begin and end in him. The vyuha sculptures around the bottom sanctum make the same point, for each has Brahma to the right and Shiva to the left. Moreover, Kalikanri made same point verbally in the first stanza of his poem about the temple: "The Speaker is the substance / Of the words He speaks, / Is Taste, Touch, Speech, Smell, and Sight, / Is auspicious Hara, / Is Naranan, / Is Brahma with four faces / And Kacci, beautiful in the rich expanse / Of her realm, is His place. . . ." In the stanza, "Is auspicious Hara, Is Naranan, Is Brahma with four faces" appears as *nallaran naranan nanmukan* (Auspicious Destroyer—Narayana—Four Faced) to replicate verbally the visual order of the vimana and to make the same theological point: Narayana in the center controls the destroyer and the creator.

In his prayer, Shiva also alluded ahead to the last south-facing corner panel (Panel S6), which portrays Vishnu's appearance as the courtesan Mohini (She Who Deludes). Since she had once seduced Shiva, he knew of what he spoke. Vasudeva's maya, Shiva said, deludes the emanation of material threads (*guna-sarga-mohit*) and binds whoever is born into it with karma. Like Mohini, deluding maya may be known but not easily escaped (*BP* 5.17.23–24).

Poykai captured the meaning of this corner panel in *Tiruvantati* 74 by alternatively describing Shiva and the Bhagavan standing side by side. He first mentioned Shiva and then the Bhagavan, which is the order in which the viewer encounters them when walking clockwise (*pradakshina*). Poykai depicted the thoughts the viewer has today when trying to understand the panel for the first time:

He rides a bull
  He rides a bird.
He burned Tripura in battle
  He ripped the chest of Man-lion.
He is ash white
  He the color of blue gem.
His body is half woman
  His lady is the lotus.
His hair is a matted pile
  His crown is tall.
He has Ganga
  He has warrior anklets deep down
    So *He* is Protector.

The end of the verse makes the point verbally that the bottom of the panel makes visually: The Bhagavan is taller than Shiva. Shiva's matted hair contains

Ganga, but the Bhagavan's crown is tall (*nil*) and his feet with warrior bracelets stand deep down (*nil*) below those of Shiva. He is long (*nil*) from head to toe.

Even though in Ilavrita Shiva worships the Plower, he is portrayed here venerating the Pre-eminently Mighty, who rules the rajas "thread" of matter. The sculpture captures the nature of rajas, for it is the source of desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*); they appear respectively as Kamadeva and Rudra Shiva. Kamadeva appears here with Shiva, because Shiva had burned him to ash with his third eye and then smeared that ash over his body.[2] In Tamilnadu, that event is liturgically associated with Kama's marriage to Rati at the Pankuni full moon, as discussed at Panel E5 below. This panel carries the story forward into the month of Chittirai and the new year, for although Shiva burned Kama, it was an act of grace on the part of the Pre-eminently Mighty, which Shiva now acknowledges as the year begins.

The two standing males also allude to Krishna's two sons by different mothers, Pradyumna and Samba. Pradyumna was Rukmini's eldest and of the highest status; Samba was the eldest born to Jambavati, the daughter of the ape Jambavan (*BP* 10.61.8–12), introduced earlier through the *Ramayana*. Krishna's son Pradyumna was the burned-up Kama reembodied, and Samba embodied Shiva's son named Guha and Skanda. Samba manifested Shiva's destructive function in the Krishna story (*BP* 3.1.28–30). The two half-brothers derive from the same Pre-eminently Mighty formation by means of Krishna, just as desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*) emerge from the single thread of passion (*rajas*) (*BG* 3.37). The half-brothers function as a pair, which is why Goda invoked both Kama deva and his younger brother in the first poem of her *Nacchiyar Tirumoli*.

Samba's appearance with Pradyumna foreshadows events in Prabhasa represented by the vimana's south-facing panels. That region on the western coast of Bharata, which is connected to the *Jayakhya-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama, is where Samba acted to unleash the final destruction of the Vrishnis. Once again, as in Sita's case, "pregnancy" functioned negatively. Samba dressed up as a pregnant girl and teased seers, who cursed him to give birth to iron, which then became weapons in a drunken battle that resulted in the "deaths" of Balarama and Krishna and the onset of the Kali Yuga. Drunk and violent at Prabhasa, Pradyumna and Samba reversed their serene balance in this panel and fought each other to "death" (*BP* 11.1 and 30).

THE PANEL. The panel is divided vertically between two standing males, each royally dressed, possessing two pairs of arms, and facing forward (Figure 14.2). They are not quite equal, however, because they stand on different levels. Pradyumna on the south (the viewer's left) stands on the lower level as if in the foreground and gazes straight ahead. He wears a crown and holds the wheel and conch in his back pair of hands. He rests his front right hand on his hip and his front left hand forms a mudra of uncertain shape at his chest.



FIGURE 14.2. Panel E6: Bhava on Kailasa venerates Pradyumna. Photo by Hudson, 1990.

To his left (the viewer's right) Bhava stands on the higher level as if behind Pradyumna and slightly oriented toward him. He is not crowned and his matted hair is piled up on the top of his head. Three of Bhava's four arms are visible. His back right arm appears to have broken off, but his back left hand rests on his hip to mirror Pradyumna's posture. His two front hands form damaged mudras at his chest. Two figures at the panel's top fly inward toward the vertical axis running down Pradyumna's left side. At the bottom a small chubby figure adjacent to Bhava looks up at Pradyumna and gestures upward with his right hand in praise. He may depict a weapon of Bhava in the shape of a person (*ayudhapurusha*).

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel moves us from the outermost continent of Earth (represented at the northeast corner) to Ilavrita at the center of Earth (represented at this southeast corner). It identifies this southeast corner panel with the mountain Kailasa standing southeast of Mount Meru, where it is always midday, and this panel represents midday in the Daytime of Boar and midday in the daytime of devas and asuras; the latter begins with the winter solstice as sunrise at the northeast corner, and ends with the summer solstice as sunset at the southwest corner. In the terms of the Vedic solar calender of twelve months, this panel represents its beginning with the month of Chaitra. The previous Panel E5 represents its ending with the month of Phalguna, as we shall see below.

Finally, the figures in this panel reverse the relation of the deva Shiva to the deva Kama as portrayed in the famous story in which Shiva burns Kama to ash; he becomes bodiless, and only his wife Rati can see him (*Shiva Purana*, Rudra-samhita 1: 8–9; and 3: 17–19). Instead, this panel depicts Shiva as Bhava venerating Pradyumna as Kama, because Kama is the pre-eminently mighty Pradyumna vyuha impelling all that Bhava does.

The Four Bracketed Panels

Panel E2: The Bhagavan Honors Dhruva with the Dhruva Realm

THE STORY. Maitreya tells this story to Vidura at Haridvara (*BP* 4.8–12; 5.23.1–3). It is part of his lengthy teaching about Vasudeva and the creation of the brahmanda (*BP* 3.5–4.31). Dhruva, the apex of space visible to the human eye, refers both to a place and to a person. All planets, the stars, the sun, and the moon circumambulate Dhruva like animals attached to an oil press. Surya's chariot is affixed to Dhruva and to great Meru directly below it, and its wheel runs along the top of the mountain range Manasottora on the outermost continent of Pushkara. Dhruva at the apex of visible space is crucial to the stability and order of chronological time measured by Surya beneath; any person who attains Dhruva goes beyond chronology into Vishnu's realm (called Vishnupadam or

Vaikunthapadam), and never returns to Earth to experience death and birth (*BP* 4.9.20–26).

The Bhagavan bestows the honor and rule of this realm to Brahma's great-grandson named Dhruva, son of Uttanapada, who is one of two sons of Shatarupa and Svayambhuva Manu. Brahma is a portion of Hari, Svyambhuva Manu is a portion of this portion, and his sons Priyavrata and Uttanapada are each a part of Vasudeva established to protect the moving universe (*BP* 4.8.6–8). When Dhruva is five years old, his father's second wife, Suruchi, deeply injures his Kshatriya pride by refusing to allow him to sit in his father's lap with her son Uttama. Dhruva's mother, Suniti, tells him that if he wants to sits equally in his father's lap he should worship the Bhagavan. Dhruva leaves the city, and the rishi Narada teaches this boy of five years the practice of visualization (*dhyana*) focused on Vasudeva and using the mantra of twelve syllables, *Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya* (*Om*, veneration to the Bhagavan Vasudeva).

Dhruva puts Narada's instruction into practice at Madhuvana on the Yamuna River, and in the fifth month of extraordinary tapas stands on one leg, focuses on Vasudeva in his heart, and controls his breath so completely that everyone in the universe is breathless. Devas seek refuge with the Bhagavan (*BP* 4.8.40–82). Vasudeva appears to Dhruva, touches his cheek with His conch, and in a long poem the child utters his profound knowledge (*BP* 4.9.6–17). Vasudeva promises Dhruva the honor of residing at the hub of the visible universe in Vishnupadam after he has ruled from his father's throne for 36,000 years. This five-year-old boy has thus attained Vaikuntha after only six months of tapas.

Dhruva returns home, but is uneasy because he had sought and attained the Atman of the Moving Universe for the sake of worldy gain; when he stood before the grantor of emancipation, mukti was not on his mind due to his injured Kshatriya pride (*BP* 4.9.27–36). At the proper age, Dhruva marries Bhrami, the daughter of Shishumara, the Alligator Constellation circling directly beneath the pole star. They have two sons named after measurements of time: The elder is Kalpa (Daytime of Brahma) and the younger is Vatsara (Year) (*BP* 4.10.1 and 5.23.4–8).

One day, one of the mighty guhyakas, who are warriors among Kubera's yakshas, kills Dhruva's unmarried brother Uttama while on a hunting trip in the mountainous Punyajanalayam, or Realm of the Meritorious, which is the domain of yakshas. Dhruva goes there and angrily routs guhyaka forces outside their city (*BP* 4.10.2–20; 4.11.1–35). During the calm of his victory, however, the guhyakas assault him with asura maya; and Dhruva responds with the Narayanastra (Narayana's Arrow or mantra) and slaughters them viciously. Svayambhuva Manu has compassion for the guhyakas and appears to remind Dhruva that killing out of anger is a sin. Since he knows Hari, why does he do it? Has he forgotten that the Bhagavan is the unmoved mover of the threads of matter? Doesn't he know that his brother was killed by the power of Time

moving these material threads? It's difficult to understand, Manu admits, but the Bhagavan distinguished in virya is both an agent and a nonagent, both a killer and a nonkiller; and guhyakas did not kill his brother, this Person did, for He is the cause of fate (*daivam*). He emanates and destroys everything, but because He has no ego He is not affected by matter's threads or by karma. Svayambhuva Manu warns Dhruva that his enraged violence has alienated Kubera, Ruler of Wealth, and the well-being of his family is threatened. His grandfather departs, and Dhruva shakes off his anger. Then when Kubera approaches him with others of the region, Dhruva venerates him and is reconciled to the Giver of Wealth.

Dhruva later performs rites addressed to the Person of Sacrifice and gains the perception of Vasudeva in his own atman and in all beings everywhere. Fixed in this perceived knowledge, Dhruva rules for 36,000 years (*BP* 4.11.33–35; 4.12.1–43). When he dies, Vasudeva's blue-skinned and four-armed servants take him up to Vaikunthapada, and on the way Dhruva steps on the head of Death, who is Mrityu (*BP* 4.12.19–43). In his devotion to Vasudeva, Dhruva bathes his head in the Ganga as she falls from Vishnu's feet down through the pole star Dhruva and onto Shiva's head; from there she flows to Mount Meru's summit, divides into four branches cascading down to Earth in the north, east, south, and west; and finally flows from the Himalayas eastward through Bharata and across the Realm of Nobles to the sea (*BP* 5.17.1–2; 1.18.21).

THE PANEL. The Bhagavan Vasudeva with two pairs of arms sits facing north (Figure 14.3). His right thigh and pendent leg hide his bent left leg, the sole of whose foot is visible under his right thigh. His hands in the back hold the wheel and conch. His front pair of hands ties a cloth around the head of Dhruva standing; his left hand holds the end of the cloth and his front right hand touches the top of Dhruva's head. This rite bestows an honor, and according to the late R. Sundaravarada Bhattacharyar, priest of this temple, when a man receives a mantra the hair is tied up with a cloth in this manner.

Beneath Vasudeva's throne sits Maitreya, whose tall piled hair appears to be decorated. He has elongated earlobes touching his shoulders, and wears bands around his arms and a cloth dhoti or veshti draping his legs. His left hand reaches up to gesture in praise to the scene above, which illustrates his long narration to Vidura.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the pole star Dhruva, located directly above the center of Earth and Mount Meru, the highest visible dimension of directional space visible to the naked eye. It thus represents the upper limit of Heaven, and the axis around which circle the sun, moon, and constellations (*nakshatra*), notably the Seven Rishis (*BP* 5.22–23). On the human level, it signifies the difficulty of virya for even the most highly developed and devout Bhagavata rulers. Dhruva quickly attained Vaikuntha through tapas

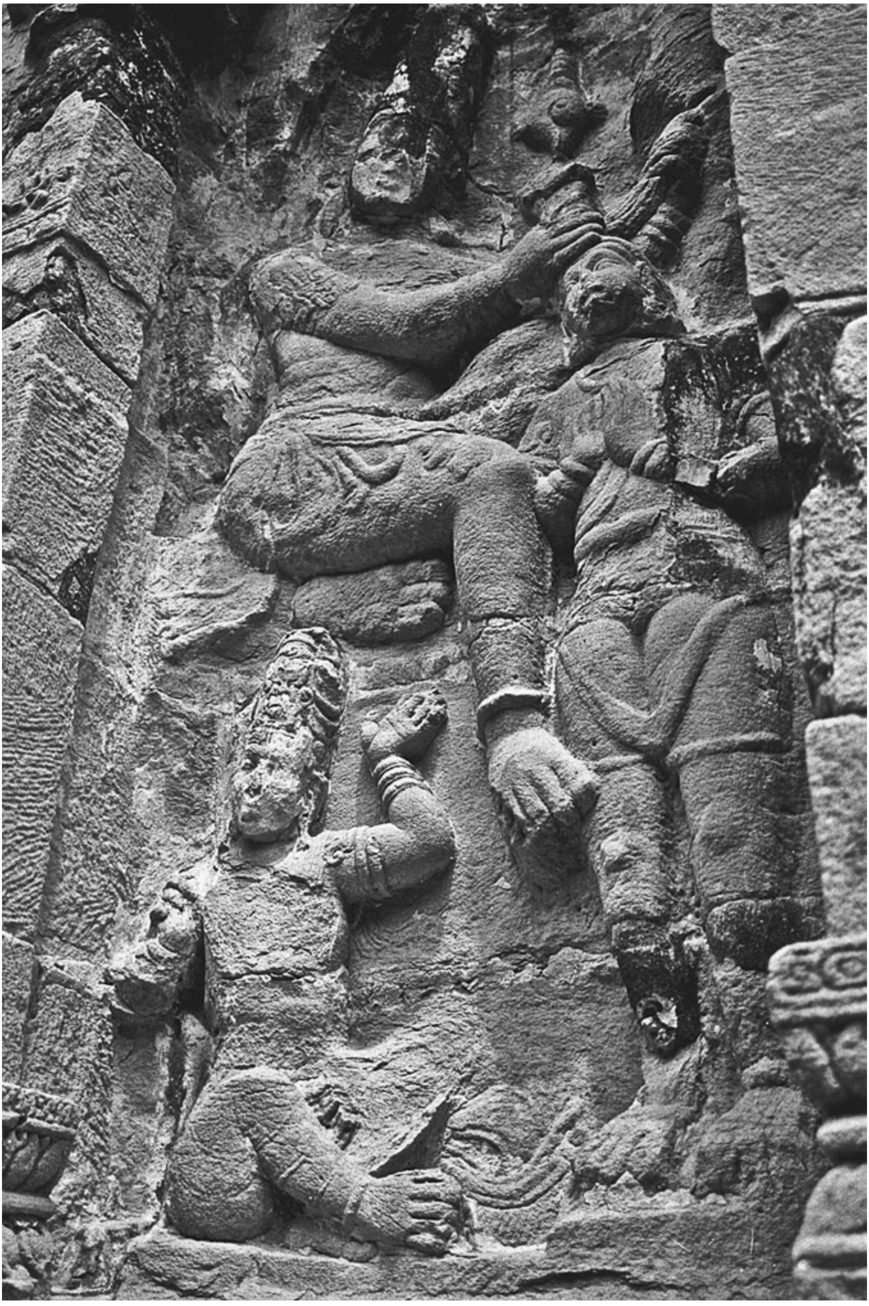


FIGURE 14.3. Panel E2: The Bhagavan honors Dhruva with the Dhruva realm. Photo by Sathya Seelan.

as a mere child, yet as a ruler he succumbed to anger at the death of his brother and retaliated viciously. But it also represents the solution to this failure: the perceived knowledge of Vasudeva as the Pre-eminently Mighty whose own virya remains a mystery.

The location of this panel directly after Brahma on the outermost Pushkara continent delineates a juncture in the seven worlds that rise in increasing material purity from Earth to the upper limit of the brahmanda. The corner panel represents the four realms of Vishnupada above Dhruva, whose inhabitants do not experience death and birth; from top down they are Satyaloka, Tapokoka, Janaloka, and Maharloka. This panel represents the three realms beneath the pole star Dhruva, whose inhabitants do experience death and birth; from top down they are Svarloka (Heaven with the constellations and planets), Bhuvarloka (Surya and the atmosphere), and Bhurloka (Earth and the seven realms of Rasa beneath) (*BP* 2.5.36–42; 5.21–23). The inhabitants of these three realms include devas and asuras; siddhas, charanas, and vidyadharas; yakshas, rakshasas, pishachas, pretas, bhutas, and human beings. The next panel represents their creation by Brahma.

Panel E3: Brahma Flees to the Bhagavan from His Asura Progeny

The Story. The story of this panel tells of Brahma creating populations for the worlds beneath Dhruva. It is part of the creation sequence told by Shuta to seers during a break from their long fire sacrifice in the Naimisha forest (*BP* 3.20). Shuta first tells them what Maitreya had told Vidura about the way Boar killed the asura Hiranyakashipu; and he then tells them this story as if to explain Hiranyakashipu's asura nature.

The story begins when the Bhagavan is playfully reclining in the primordial waters and enters into Brahma to establish the worlds as before. Brahma emits various forms from his body and then abandons them; an abandoned form then becomes a body for beings; and these beings act according to the nature of the abandoned form that produced them. Brahma begins with his shadow, using it to emit ignorance (*avidya*) in five segments: anger, complete darkness of soul, delusion, infatuation, and great confusion. Unhappy with ignorance, he abandons it and it becomes nighttime, the source of hunger and thirst, and of the bodies of yakshas and rakshasas. Hunger and thirst propel these nighttime demons toward Brahma as food, but he persuades them not to eat him because he is their father.

From the splendor of his divinity, Brahma then emits whatever is divine. It becomes daytime, and devas joyfully take it as their bodies. Brahma next produces eager desire or lolupa from his loins and it produces asuras. These lolupa beings see their father Brahma as the object of their lust and approach him to copulate. Brahma laughs at first and then becomes angry. But to his horror, his asura sons are serious, and he flees for protection to the Bhagavan's

feet. Hari takes shape for him, and Brahma pleads for help. Hari advises Brahma to abandon this dreadful (*ghora*) state of mind. When he does, his lolupa becomes Samdhya, or Twilight, in the shape of a stunningly beautiful courtesan skilled in manipulating her lusting customers. "What a beautiful figure!" the asuras proclaim, "What boldness! What a lovely young age! She who has no desire is among us who are filled with it!" Stupidly the asuras think Twilight belongs to them.

Brahma continues to emit beings. Gandharvas and apsaras appear from his beauty, which enjoys itself by itself, and their bodies are made of moonlight. Bhutas and pishachas emerge from his lassitude, naked and with disheveled hair, and their bodies are made from yawning sleep (and they attack sleepers who drip saliva to create nightmares and madness). Sadhya rishis and pitri ancestors emerge from Brahma's invisible energy (and invisibly consume the havya and kavya offerings in the shraddha rites of the dead). Siddhas and vidyadharas emerge from Brahma's power of invisibility and have bodies made of it. Kinnaras and kimpurushas emerge from Brahma's admiration of his own reflection, and couples in bodies made of it sing Brahma's praises during morning sacrifices. Eventually Brahma is so frustrated with these creations that in a body of anger he lies down and flails his hands and legs; and when he abandons this body of anger, snakes emerge from its hair and cruel serpents and hooded nagas from its limbs.

At last Brahma's mind is satisfied, relaxed, and at peace, and the manus emerge from it to populate the world with mankind. Brahma gives humans his own form as person (*purusha*), which delights all creatures, because mankind will feed them with the offerings of the prescribed kriya ceremonies. Brahma brings himself under control through tapas and knowledge, engages in yoga, and enters into samadhi. From it come his favorite progeny, the rishi seers. He gives them skills in unified consciousness (*samadhi*), in the discipline of consciousness (*yoga*), in supernormal powers (*siddhi*), in ascetic practice (*tapas*), in knowledge (*vidya*), and in indifference to worldly enjoyments (*virakti*). The rishis begin with their skill in virakti indifference, and they end with the samadhi consciousness that makes them seers.

THE PANEL. The Bhagavan Hari dressed royally and with a tall crown stands with two pairs of arms facing directly eastward (Figure 14.4). His back left hand holds the conch. His back right hand holds the wheel as a prayogachakra to signal his opposition to the asuras pursuing Brahma. His front left hand rests on his hip and his front right hand holds the abhayamudra of protection. Two small figures fly above his crowned head with hand gestures raised in praise.

To his left, Brahma kneels on both knees, looks downward, and forms the anjalimudra with his front pair of hands, the posture of one seeking protection. He appears to hold his water jar with his back left arm (not visible in the



FIGURE 14.4. Panel E3: Brahma flees to the Bhagavan from his asura progeny. AIIS.

photograph), and holds his rosary with his back right hand, which is visible beneath his front right shoulder. Brahma has only one face, as the story indicates, and due to his flight his hair emerges at its sides from beneath his crown.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel uses the most controversial event in the story to represent Brahma's emission of the beings populating the worlds

beneath the pole star Dhruva (as discussed at Panel E2). It identifies lolupa or eager desire with the male's genital region or "lap," and with asuras; and it defines lolupa as opposite to the virya represented by this northeastern side of the temple mandala. It also identifies samdhya, the evening twilight, as especially alluring to asuras for the satisfaction of their eager desire. Twilight has the shape of a courtesan made of lolupa, but she possesses no desire of her own; and Vishnu as Mohini takes her shape at Panel S6. Finally, this panel implies a moral judgment of men who in the evening patronize courtesans: they act like asuras, for they allow their "laps" to lead them to female embodiments of their own lolupa, who then manipulate them, just as Mohini manipulates asuras (and Shiva), as we shall see below.

Panel E4: Hanuman Worships Rama in the Kimpurusha Region of Jambu

THE STORY. The supreme Bhagavata Hanuman resides in the region of Jambu called Kimpurusha, which is directly north of Bharata. According to the *Mahabharata*, he dwells on the Gandhamadana mountain range, a place frequented by kinnaras, gandharvas, and apsaras, home to the rakshasa Kubera, who rules the yakshas, and the location of the ashram of the royal rishi Arishtishena (*Mbh* 3.155–156; van Buitenen 2: 519–525). According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, Hanuman dwells there throughout the Kali Yuga, and together with the devotees of this region worships Rama, the brother of Lakshmana and the husband of Sita (*BP* 5.19.1–8). The royal rishi Arishtishena leads gandharvas in singing Rama's story called the *Bhagavatkatha*; and Hanuman chants a brief prayer, which begins *Om namo bhagavate uttamashlokaya* (*Om* veneration to the Bhagavan Uttamashloka).

Hanuman venerates the Bhagavan Vasudeva, who as the avatar Rama not only destroys rakshasas but also becomes attached in order to teach people about the dangerous role attachment plays in the rule of a righteous king. Hanuman gives three examples of Rama's attachments contrary to virya. One is his attachment to Sita as his wife, the cause of his sorrow when Ravana imprisons her in Lanka. Another is his attachment to Sita as mother of his progeny, which causes him pain when he orders Lakshmana to take her while pregnant into the forest and leave her there. The third is Rama's attachment to his beloved brother Lakshmana, which causes him distress when he banishes Lakshmana to fulfill a promise he had unwittingly made to Time disguised as an ascetic. Nevertheless, Rama's sovereign attachment can be gracious, for he takes all of Kosala's inhabitants with him to Heaven when he leaves Earth, and in the Kali Yuga this gives hope to devas, asuras, monkeys, and humans. All the while, of course, the Bhagavan Vasudeva remains unaffected by Rama's attachments, because his aishvarya acts are those of virya, and God is never entangled by what He does.

The reason Hanuman is in this Gandhamadana mountain range of the Kimpurusha region is explained at the end of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. When Rama takes his subjects to Heaven, Hanuman chooses to stay on Earth, and Rama tells him to keep in mind his words and to live happily as long as the story of Rama told, which he does (*Ram* 7.108.32–34). In the *Mahabharata*, Bhima walks northeast looking for a flower for Draupadi and comes to Gandhamadana, where he encounters Hanuman. The monkey is huge and worn down by age. Hanuman reveals to Bhima the great and vigorous shape he had during Rama's career, and tells him they are brothers, because the deva Vayu or Wind is father to them both. Hanuman promises to assist his much younger brother during battle: At strategic moments he will ferociously roar from his perch on the flagstaff of Bhima's younger brother, Arjuna, who is Indra's son, Krishna's friend, and future hero of the Great War (*Mbh* 3.146–150).

The stories of Rama's final three acts, when separated from the surrounding stories that elaborate narrative details, recapitulate Valmiki's *Ramayana* from the time Rama took the throne in Ayodhya to his ascension with Bharata and Satrughna into the "deva made of Vishnu" (*visnumaya deva*). The light they shed on this panel reveals just how sophisticated a work of visual literature the temple is.

RAMA SEPARATES FROM SITA (*RAM* 7.42–49; 51–52; 91–99). After Rama returned to Ayodhya as king, he and Sita spent about two years of pleasure in the royal Ashoka grove, and Sita became pregnant. Rama asked what would satisfy the desires her beautiful (*kalyana*) condition generated, and she said a visit to the pure forests of ascetic practice on the banks of the Ganga. Rama said she would go the next day. That evening, however, Rama learned what men in Ayodhya were saying: "After Rama had astoundingly built the bridge to Lanka, slayed Ravana, and subdued the rakshasas, he subdued his indignation (*amarsha*) and took Sita back into his house. What kind of pleasure born of his union with Sita is there in his heart? Ravana seized her bodily and took her by force to Lanka where rakshasas kept her in the Ashoka grove. Why does Rama not despise her who was subject to the will of rakshasas? We will have to treat our wives the same way, because the subjects follow the lead of the king" (*Ram* 7.43.14–19). Sita's pregnancy was the occasion for the male gossip. Was Rama really the father? It was not Ravana, because it had been too long since his death, but it could be someone in the court, because once "polluted" by the touch and world of rakshasas, Sita would lust after other men in the way Shurpanakha had lusted after Rama and Lakshmana. Worse of all, Rama's desire for Sita must be corrupt, because he took her back even though "polluted." Consequently, if their own wives become pregnant by others, they will have to keep them and raise the children as their own, because they have to do what the king does. The gossip thus circled around the nature of Rama's pleasure in Sita, born as it was from sexual union with her.

Infamy or shame (*akirti*) is the greatest of dangers for a ruler, and Rama feared it. With enormous sorrow he therefore instructed Lakshmana to take Sita across the Ganga the next morning and leave her there. Sita thus got her wish to visit the forests of pure ascetic practice, but not as she had intended. In the forest, Varuna's son, the seer Valmiki, who knew what was happening because he wrote the *Ramayana*, found Sita and took her to his ashram to live. In Valmiki's ashram Sita gave birth to twin boys, Kusha and Lava. When they matured, they looked just like their father (*Ram* 7.94.14–15).

In the meantime, Lakshmana learned from his charioteer that the seer Durvasas had earlier told Rama's father, Dasharatha, that one day Rama would suffer separation from those dear to him, because Vishnu had long ago been cursed by Bhrigu. Vishnu had angrily cut off the head of Bhrigu's wife because she had given refuge to his daitya enemies. Bhrigu therefore cursed Vishnu to be a man who, like him, suffers separation from his innocent wife. Vishnu accepted the curse for the welfare of the world. Lakshmana was comforted by that explanation, and when he returned to Rama he advised him not to grieve, because Kala (Time) brings everything to an end. Since the rumor about Sita would no doubt circle Ayodhya again, he said, Lakshmana advised Rama to restrain himself and take satisfaction in performing his royal duties, which Rama did.

After some years, Rama performed a horse sacrifice, to which the twin sons he did not know came to sing the *Ramayana* Valmiki had composed. While listening to it, Rama learned that Kusha and Lava were Sita's sons (*Ram* 7.95.2). He quickly sent a messenger to Valmiki asking him to bring Sita back to Adyodhya for a public testimony to her purity.

Valmiki arrived with Sita in the midst of Ayodhya's great crowd and testified that he, Varuna's son, had never told a lie and that Sita was absolutely pure. Rama then replied that her purity had already been proven in Lanka and that he had forsaken her "from fear of the world" even while he knew she was sinless. In everyone's sight Rama then proclaimed Kusha and Lava to be his sons and testified to his love (*priti*) for Sita who is pure (*shuddha*). At that point, divine beings and seers led by Brahma arrived; once again Rama spoke his love for pure Sita in public.

It was now Sita's turn. Dressed in the ochre (*kashaya*) garments of an ascetic and gazing downward she said: "If I have never thought of another man but Rama, may Goddess Madhavi grant me an opening. If I venerate only Rama with mind, act, and speech, may Goddess Madhavi grant me an opening. If I speak in truth that no one other than Rama is known to me, may Goddess Madhavi grant me an opening" (*Ram* 7.97.13–16). Suddenly, a wondrous throne supported by nagas and holding Goddess Dharani arose out of the earth. The Goddess graciously took Sita by the hand, seated her on the throne with her, and descended into the realm of Taste (Rasatala). Sita had returned to her origin.

Everyone else rejoiced, but Rama wept in anger and sorrow. As he watched "Majesty in the shape of Sita" (*sita shririva rupini*) disappear into the arms of his mother-in-law, Goddess Vasudha, he experienced a sorrow unlike anything before; he threatened to wreak havoc on earth (*bhumi*) if she did not return his wife. Brahma spoke up to assure Rama that he would join Sita in heaven (*svarga*), and told him to listen to the remainder of the *Ramayana* to learn of his future (*Ram* 7.97–98). The next morning, Rama resumed listening to Kusha and Lava recite the *Ramayana*. Now he learned that he would never marry again and that a golden image of Sita would serve as queen during his sacrifices. He learned of the prosperity and well-being of his kingdom, of the deaths of his mothers Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi, and of the thousands of years he would rule in harmony with Dharma (*Ram* 7.99).

RAMA BANISHES LAKSHMANA (*RAM* 7.103–106). One day, Kala (Time) appeared in the guise of an ascetic at Rama's door. He told Lakshmana that he had a great message for Rama. After Lakshmana admitted him to Rama's presence, the ascetic told him that his message was only between the two of them and if anyone else heard or even saw them, Rama must kill him. Rama agreed and told Lakshmana to guard the door himself and repeated the punishment. The ascetic then told Rama:

> In your previous existence I was your son, Kala, arising from maya as destroyer of all. The Grandfather (Brahma), who is the venerable master of the world, has sent me to tell you:
>
> "O Bhagavan, the time you set for protecting the world has been fulfilled. Prior to emanation, you destroyed the worlds with your maya, and while lying on the great waters you gave birth to me. Then by maya you produced the endless hooded Naga to lie above, and the powerful Madhu and Kaitabha, whose bones covered the earth as mountains to make it Medini. After you produced the shining lotus at your navel and then me, you assigned me the work (*karma*) belonging to the Master of Progeny (*Prajapati*). Acting accordingly, I asked you to protect the moving universe (*jagat*).
>
> "From the eternal Bhagavan you became Vishnu, and through Aditi you were born as Dwarf. When you resolved to kill Ravana, you decided to rule for 11,000 years. Thus as the 'son made of mind' (*manomaya putra*) your years among men are completed and Kala has been sent to you. If you wish to continue among men you may, of course, but if you wish to protect the world of devas, they need Vishnu as their lord." (*Ram* 7.104.1–15)

Rama laughingly told the destroyer of all that he would act according the wondrous words of the deva of devas and would return to the place from which he had come.

Significantly, Rama's end came at the beginning of the twelfth millennium of his rule. That corresponds to the twelfth month of the year, which in Tamil is Pankuni (Phalguna). This first of two panels representing Pankuni suggests the month's beginning.

In the meantime, however, the seer Durvasas appeared at Rama's door and insisted that Lakshmana admit him immediately. When Lakshmana refused, Durvasas's anger was uncontrollable and he threatened to curse Lakshmana, the region of Bharata, and all Raghu's lineage. Thinking it would be best if only he died and not others, Lakshmana interrupted Rama's meeting with the ascetic to report Durvasas's arrival. Rama immediately left Kala to receive Durvasas, who had just completed a thousand-year fast and wanted to honor Rama by allowing him to feed him his first cooked food (*bhojana*). After Rama fed him, Durvasas left in satisfaction for his ashram. But remembering Kala's words, Rama grieved that his family would die.

Lakshmana saw Rama grieving and urged him to keep his word about the interruption and punish him, for men who do not keep their promises go to purgatory (*naraka*). Rama was distressed and consulted his advisors. Vasishtha said that Kala is too powerful to resist and agreed that for the sake of Dharma, Rama had to keep his promise to kill anyone who interrupted his meeting with Kala. Rama turned to Lakshmana and instead of killing him, told him to leave; sadhus, he said, agree that forsaking (*tyaga*) someone is the same as killing (*vadha*) him.

Immediately Lakshmana left. He did not return home, but went directly to the Sarayu River, where he performed rites and began restraining his senses in yoga. Indra, devas, apsarases, and seers then appeared, sprinkled flowers on him, and, in a body invisible to humans, took him to Indra's realm. Devas rejoiced at "the return of one of Vishnu's four portions" (*Ram* 7.106.18).

Rama Takes All Inhabitants of Kosala to Heaven (*Ram* 7.107–110). Once Lakshmana had left, Rama began preparations to follow in his footsteps. He asked his gathered subjects what they wanted him to do for them. They said that if he were pleased with them, to take them and their progeny and spouses to heaven with him; out of love (*priti*) they wanted to follow him. Rama acknowledged their steadfast bhakti and agreed (*Ram* 7.107.16).

Rama decided to consecrate Bharata king of Ayodhya, but Bharata insisted on following him. He therefore anointed Kusha the ruler of south Kosala at Kushavati in the Vindhyas, and Lava the ruler of north Kosala at Shravasta. In the meantime, Shatrughna at Madhura (Mathura) on the Yamuna River anointed his son Subahu ruler at Madhura and his son Shatrughati ruler at Vidisha. Alone, he traveled eastward to Ayodhya to join Rama for his final journey. At that point, Sugriva appeared in Ayodhya from the south, leading monkeys who change shape at will, apes, and rakshasas. They wanted to see Rama leave for heaven. Similarly, sons of devas, of seers, and of gandharvas

arrived from the north to ask to go with Rama. Sugriva told Rama he had anointed Valin's son, Angada, as ruler in order to follow him. Rama agreed to let them all accompany him.

Rama then addressed Vibhishana. He told him to rule in Lanka as long as the sun, the moon, and Medini remain, to protect the world, and to worship the Ikshvaku clan deity Jagannatha (Lord of the Moving Universe), whom Indra and the devas should also forever worship. Rama then spoke to Hanuman. As long as his story (*katha*) circulates, he said, so long will Hari be Ruler in the world. "Keep my words in mind and live happily" (*Ram* 7.108.32–34). Rama next turned to Jambavat, the ancient son of Brahma, and to all five sons of Jambavat together, and said, "You will live as long as the Kali Yuga persists" (*Ram* 7.108.36–38). That explains why Jambavat was alive during Krishna's lifetime and had a daughter, Jambhavati, who became Krishna's wife and gave birth to Samba.

In the morning, Vasishtha performed the rites for the great departure (*mahaprasthana*), and Rama walked westward toward the Sarayu River. The shape of Goddess Shri with the lotus walked silently at his right and Goddess Mahi walked at his left, followed by males and females, birds, flocks of animals, monkeys, and those who came to watch. They reached the place in the river to depart for heaven and Brahma appeared. He asked Rama to enter with his brothers into his own form (*tanu*), either into that pertaining to Vishnu or into eternal space. Rama chose to enter Vishnu in a body of tejas, along with Bharata and Satrughna. Devas then worshiped "the deva made of Vishnu" (*Ram* 7.110.9–15).

Vishnu of great tejas now instructed Brahma to admit those who followed him out of love (*sneha*) into a realm, and gave a promise of hope for all ages: "Bhaktas who have pursued me and renounced themselves for me attain me" (*Ram* 7.110.17). Brahma obeyed and granted them places in the worlds called Santana, a part of Visnu's realm (*vishnupada*) close to Brahma's world, which shares its qualities (*guna*). All the monkeys and apes born of devas then returned to their origins, and Sugriva entered the sphere of Sun (*suryamandala*). Everyone else who wanted to follow Rama, including animals and unmoving objects, apes, monkeys, and raksasas, entered the river, gained divine forms, and entered deva worlds (*Ram* 7.110).

That ends the story. A final chapter describes the benefits derived from reading and listening to Valmiki's great kavya.

THE PANEL. Rama appears in this panel as an icon standing on a pedestal (Figure 14.5). He is dressed royally, wears a tall crown, and faces eastward with two pairs of arms. His back left hand holds the conch and his back right hand holds the wheel positioned as a prayogachakra. His front left hand rests on his lower hip, and at his right breast his damaged right hand forms what appears to be the abhayamudra of protection matching the prayogachakra above it.



FIGURE 14.5. Panel E4: Hanuman worships Rama in the Kimpurusha region of Jambu (prior to repair). Photo by Hudson, 1992.

Hanuman appears with one pair of arms in the shape he had during Rama's career. He wears a short dhoti or veshti tied up as if for wrestling and his hair is piled up, or perhaps he wears a crown. He kneels to Rama's right at the base of the icon's pedestal, his right knee and his left foot resting on the ground below it as he bends down toward Rama's feet with the anjalimudra of veneration. The small figure of a gandharva flies at Rama's right above and behind Hanuman; no complementary gandharva appears on Rama's left side. The royal seer Arishtishena is not depicted.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the Kimpurusha region of the Jambu continent, directly north of Bharata, and depicts the aishvarya sovereignty of Vasudeva's avatar as Rama the son of Dasharatha, whose story Valmiki tells in his *Ramayana*. Specifically, it represents the ending of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, which tells of Rama's sovereign rule of Kosala after he, Sita, and Lakshmana had returned from Lanka and he was anointed king. Brahma appears in the stories to continue his role from the three previous east-facing panels, but as supervisor not of the beginning but of the end. Brahma's messenger is Time, and the hunger and thirst of yaksas and raksasas from his shadow now appear in Durvasas.

The depiction of Hanuman praying to the icon of Rama signals that puja worship with true bhakti is the means by which the Bhagavan's sovereignty overrules His own implacable Time (*kala*). Time destroys all things, endings are painful, and beautiful pregnancy as a beginning is an occasion for ugly thoughts leading to an end. The beauty (*kalyana*) of Sita's pregnancy reveals that the king's dharma to maintain the kingdom's stability and prosperity costs his dharma as husband and father. Even though Sita makes him whole as his wife and becomes his "mother" at the birth of his sons, he must abandon her and them for the sake of his inherited kingship. When Rama told Lakshmana to take Sita away, he told one part of himself to cut off another part. Just as his father's faithfulness to dharma had ended his life with the pain of separation, Rama's life would end the same way. Time ends all things, endings lead to separation and death, and separation and death are painful.

Rama banished Lakshmana to reveal that not only must the king be free from shame or infamy, even if such a charge is based on a lie, he must also be faithful to his word, no matter where it leads. At the same time, a ruler must be grateful to his advisors, who cannot erase words but through interpretation can mitigate their impact. Rama's words were Time's way to bring Rama's story to an end.

Finally, the subjects of Kosala represent bhaktas of all kinds, and Rama emancipates them all, which is why the otherwise distressing ending of the *Ramayana* remains a source of hope for Rama bhaktas in this Kali Yuga. The ascent of Kosala's inhabitants to the highest heavens reveals bhakti to be the solution to Time's tyranny of beginnings that lead to endings. Rama dearly loves those who dearly love him, all of whom will ascend beyond Dhruva to the worlds of Vishnu's realm (*vishnupada*).

Panel E5: Kamadeva in the Ketumala Region of Jambu Plays "Krishna Holding up Govardhana"

The Story. West of Mount Meru on the Jambu continent is the Ketumala region ruled by Vatsara (Year), the younger son of Dhruva and Bhrami (*BP*

5.18.15–23). Vatsara the Year begets 36,000 sons as days and 36,000 daughters as nights. His sons and daughters marry each other, and these pairs constitute 36,000 day-and-nights or ahoratras. Each year the 36,000 wives become pregnant, but at year's end the tejas of the wheel Sudarshana frightens them and they give birth to stillborn babies. In Ketumala the Bhagavan appears as the essential shape of Kamadeva (the Lord of Senses), and Goddess Lakshmi resides there as Ramadevi, "the Dear One." Kamadeva delights Ramadevi and Vatsara's 36,000 sons and 36,000 daughters as they watch him play.

This panel portrays the Lord of Senses entertaining Ramadevi and the others with a play (*lila*) about the time in Krishna's life in Gokula he lifted the mountain Govardhana (*BP* 5.18.16–17). The panel resembles a seventh-century Mamallapuram relief in a cave-mandapa of Krishna lifting Govardhana.[3] In the two depictions Krishna's posture is the same, but the Mamallapuram relief also depicts Balarama standing under the mountain with Nanda and Yashoda, and Pinnai standing under it with Krishna and other gopis. In ancient Tamil lore, Pinnai is Krishna's cowherd wife whom he won by slaying seven demons disguised as bulls, a story Kalikanri referred to in his penultimate stanza about the temple: "Pinnai's forehead is a / Gleaming crescent moon / And she's a cousin, / So long ago in battle / He subdued deceiving Lust / In the shape of seven bulls, / And now owns beautiful Kacci / With its surrounding wealth // Where the Sovereign of Pallavas / Serves the Vishnu-house he built / after he conquered those / angry kings with swords / stained black from blood / As the Emperor who owns / The Drum with a bitter mouth / And the Conch with the roar of the sea" (*PT* 2.9.9). The stanza correlates Krishna's desire for Pinnai and his act to satisfy it with Nandivarman's sovereign acts as Bhagavata emperor. It illustrates vividly the meaning of the east-facing panels and particularly this panel's depiction of Krishna lifting Govardhana.

The *Bhagavata Purana* does not say how Kamadeva in Ketumala was entertaining Ramadevi and the sons and daughters of Year, so the designers decided to depict him enacting the play (*lila*) about Govardhana. That episode represents the sovereignty (*aishvarya*) appropriate to the east-facing side and to the month of Pankuni corresponding to this panel.

Indra, whose capital is in the east, is responsible for rains. Krishna lifted Govardhana as an umbrella to shield Gokula from the excessive rains Indra brought because of jealousy (*BP* 10.24–27). Those rains refer to the monsoon important to the Pallava realm, which comes from the east and falls as the northeast monsoon. In the ninth century (assuming that weather patterns a millennium ago resembled those of today), the rains fell during the months of Karttikai (Krittika) and Markali (Margashirsha) and ended around the winter solstice.[4] As discussed in chapter 13, the entire north-facing side of the vimana represents the month of Markali and the rains of the northeast monsoon. The east-facing corner panel of Brahma with the lotus represents the "sunrise" of the winter solstice.

This panel, far from that Brahma panel, represents the end of Pankuni, which is the month of the vernal equinox long after the monsoon and the twelfth month of the year. It falls under the protective jurisdiction of the murti Govinda, and the name Govinda refers to Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana. After Indra admitted defeat, he became Krishna's devotee. Krishna put the mountain back in place, and Indra and Surabhi, the Cow of cows, consecrated him with the heroic title "Indra of Cows" (Govinda) (*BP* 10.27). For the unction (*abhisheka*), Surabhi poured milk and Indra poured Ganga water.

The murti Govinda protects the three hot months that begin with Pankuni (*Satvata-samhita* 8.1–136; Smith 1975: 521). Their heat is connected to erotic heat and pregnancy, for on Pankuni's full moon connected to the vernal equinox, Erotic Desire (*Kama*) and his wife Erotic Pleasure (*Rati*) unite as a couple, a paradigm of marriage. A girl who had bathed in Markali's cold waters for the sake of a husband and prosperity, as Goddess Rama noted in her prayer, would have had her marriage arranged during the three months after the winter solstice—Tai, Machi, Pankuni—which are known today as the "wedding season." Ideally, the wedding ceremony would take place around Pankuni's full moon or later, because any child conceived through the initial coupling would be born after the following winter solstice in the auspicious light half rather than in the inauspicious dark half of the year.[5]

Ketumala in the panel not only represents the month that ends the solar year and begins three hot months, but also the marriage and pregnancy of Year's 36,000 male days and female nights. The panel affirms erotic desire within marriage and reveals its inevitable ending, as does the *Ramayana* as illustrated by the previous panel. Time brings all things to an end. Goddess Rama's prayer reveals the solution: consecration to the service of the Bhagavan, who as the Pre-eminently Mighty Lord of Senses satisfies all desire in himself. This panel thus signifies the consecration (*diksha*) of the bhakta whose love for God the previous panel introduced.

Poems Addressed by Goda (Antal) to the Ruler of Senses. Goddess Rama's reference in her prayer to women performing vows (*vrata*) to attain husbands alludes to a bathing vow that girls performed during the Tamil months of Markali (Margashirsha) and Tai (Pushya). In her two works, *Tiruppavai* and *Nacciyar Tirumoli*, the ninth-century poet Goda (Antal) linked that bathing vow to other rites that continued into the month of Pankuni (Hudson 1980, 1982). Her desire resembled the desire of Ramadevi's prayer, and her sadhana reveals that she had received the vishnuhasta that Goddess Rama longed for.

In *Tiruppavai*, Goda recorded the liturgical awakening of Madhusudana at the temple in Villi's New Town during the month of Markali. She recorded her sadhana's visualization (*dhyana*) in that poem: The gathered worshipers in New Town were gopis at Nanda's house attempting to awaken Krishna so that

he would give them the ritual implements they required for their vowed predawn bath and worship of Goddess Chandika Durga Katyayani. The intent of that bathing vow was to gain the majestic pleasure (*bhukti*) of serving Krishna forever. The means to it was Krishna's gopi wife Pinnai, and they succeeded because they enlisted her on their side.

In the fourteen poems of *Nacciyar Tirumoli*, however, Goda went beyond bhukti to mukti; she used her sadhana's visualization (*dhyana*) to become Pinnai lying in bed with Krishna in Nanda's house (Hudson 1993c; 1995–1996). Goda had already identified Pinnai as Goddess Shri (*Tiruppavai* 20). She began this sadhana on the first day of Pankuni and describes it in detail in the first of *Nacciyar Tirumoli*'s fourteen poems. She tells us that from first day of Tai, through the whole month of Machi, to the first day of Pankuni, she had performed rites to enlist the aid of Krishna's son Kamadeva and his younger half-brother Samba. She described the morning puja she offered the bodiless Kama by writing his name on a wall, her processions with liturgists in New Town's streets, and the food she cooked for him. Those rites end in the late morning represented by this panel. The task she assigned Kama as Lord of Senses was to bring her to Krishna in Vrindavana by the time of Pankuni's full moon:

> The whole month of Tai
> I purified the ground
> And laid a graceful mandala,
> From the first day of Machi
> I decorated the streets with fine sand
> And made them beautiful,
>   O god without a body,
> "Will I ever live?" I wondered
> And worshiped you and your younger brother,
>   You can direct me to the Lord of Venkatam
>   Who holds the incomparable Wheel
>   Spitting hot fire
>   Can't you? (1)
>
> I decorated the streets with fine white sand,
> Bathed in a pond before the sky grew light,
> Fed thornless branches to a fire,
> And endured all for you,
> O god of Desire—
>   You can make a honey-filled flower
>   Your arrow,
>   Write on it the incomparable name
>   "Ocean Colored Lord"

And shoot me into the target
"He Split the Mouth of the Bird"
Can't you? (2)

Holding coral tree blossoms
And flowers with sweet intoxicating fragrance
I worshiped your feet three times a day,
And if my burning heart said,
"He is not real"
I didn't speak it and slander you at all—
You can make clusters of blooming flowers Your arrow,
Write on it the incomparable name
"Govinda"
And shoot me into the Light of
"Wisdom Residing on Venkatam"
Can't you? (3)

I wrote your ancient name on a wall,
And while facing it showed you
Auspicious flags bearing your shark emblem,
Horses, ladies waving yak-tail fans,
Bows of sugarcane,
And I gave them all to you,
Didn't you notice, O god of Desire?—
My swollen breasts
Craving since youth
Are meant for Dvaraka's Lord alone,
So I have been worshiping you
For you can make that happen quickly,
Can't you? (4)

My full and swollen breasts
Meant for the Supreme Being
Whose body bears the Wheel and Conch
Are like food set aside by Brahmins
In the sacrifice for gods in heaven—
If you say they're meant for a man,
That's like a fox wandering
From the forest into the altar
To lick, smell, and pick the food over,
And I won't go on living,
Don't you see, Manmatha? (5)

Every day I appear on the street with
Handsome men, young men, learned men,
Skillful reciters of hymns
To observe Pankuni perfectly, O god of Desire—
    So you should graciously make him
    Whose skin is dark like a black cloud,
        a purple Kaya flower,
        or the sky-blue Karuvilai
    Look at me through his auspicious eyes
    In his splendid lotus face,
    Don't you see? (6).

I cook green paddy with sugarcane,
And new rice with brown sugar for aval,
And worship you with mantras
Sung by Brahmins of good voice, O Manmatha—
    So give me this world's greatest glory,
    The touch of Trivikrama
    Who long ago measured the land,
    His auspicious hands on my lustrous belly
    And soft full breasts,
    Won't you? (7).

My body is tarnished,
My hair is disheveled,
My lips are colorless,
And I eat only once,
O splendid and able god of Desire,
Don't you notice the vow I endure?—
    Don't you know my lord?
    Only one thing's left to say:
    Graciously crown my womanhood
    By making this true:
    "She will seize the feet
    Of her beloved Keshava." (8)

I worship you three times a day,
Venerate your feet,
Toss pure flowers in adoration,
And sing your praise,
But I faultlessly serve only him
Whose color is the sea surrounding the earth—
    And if I don't get true life

I'll run wild
Weeping and wailing
Crying out "Mother!"
And you'll be thoroughly disgraced,
As if after yoking an ox to the plow
You worked it but never fed it,
Don't you see? (9)

By venerating the feet of Lord Kama
Whose bow is sugarcane and arrows are flowers
And by telling him,
"The one there who ripped off the tusk
Of the incomparable roaring elephant
And split the mouth of the bird,
He the color of blue gem,
Set me aside for him."
Goda, the daughter of Vishnucitta,
King of those who reside in New Town
Where storied houses soar like mountains,
Wove this Tamil garland out of desire,
And whoever recites it skillfully
Will no doubt reach the feet of the King
Ruling those who reside in Vishnu's Realm. (10)

On her sadhana's second day, Goda began visualizing herself as Pinnai growing up in Gokula to become the bride Krishna would win by slaying seven bulls. In each poem she documented her increasingly complex experience as Pinnai in relationship to Gopala Krishna, until the fourteenth day. That night the full moon would appear. Goda's goal was union with Krishna in the manner of Sri Lakshmi's union with Vasudeva. No poem records her experience on the fifteenth and full moon day; her silence, we may surmise, testifies to the samadhi she attained.

The Panel. The Bhagavan in the shape of Kamadeva (Figure 14.6) has two arms standing in the familiar posture of Krishna lifting the mountain Govardhana found elsewhere in Pallava sculpture—most notably at Mamallapuram, where Krishna is depicted as if holding up with one hand the entire cliff on which the famous "Descent of the Ganges" is carved. Kamadeva as Krishna turns his body slightly northward and faces his head with a tall crown tilted slightly southward toward the viewer. He rests his right hand on his right hip as his straight left arm rises at a slight angle pushing upward as if against the bottom of the imagined hill Govardhana. His straight right leg faces the viewer, and his left foot casually rests on a higher elevation.



FIGURE 14.6. Panel E5: Kamadeva in the Ketumala region of Jambu plays "Krishna holding up Govardhana" (prior to repair). Photo by Rhie.

Slightly behind Kamadeva to his left are two badly damaged figures. Vatsara the Year stands with his head at the level of Kamadeva's chest. He stretches his left arm northward and holds his right hand at his breast as if forming a mudra. In front of him Ramadevi sits with legs crossed in the posture suitable for yoga and forms the anjalimudra of veneration with her two hands. Her head is at the level of Kamadeva's left knee and thigh, and she appears to wear a breast band.

The Panel's Meanings. This panel represents the Ketumala region of the Jambu continent, which is west of Mount Meru; it also represents the ending of the Vedic solar year with the month of Phalguna. The solar year begins with the month of Chaitra, which corresponds to the next panel, Panel E6 at the southeast corner. The ending of this solar year told as an allegory of a lifetime of one hundred years is signified by this panel.

The Year, derived from Dhruva as his son Vatsara, is measured by Surya's course beneath the pole star Dhruva (of Panel E2); it consists of 360 day-and-nights (*ahoratra*). Vatsara the Year replicates these 360 ahoratras through his progeny, which as couples are the sum of a lifetime of one hundred years. These couples are 36,000 daytime sons and 36,000 nighttime daughters united by eager desire or lolupa (Panel E3). These ahoratra couples begin each year pregnant with possibilities, but each year ends with these possibilities stillborn due to Sudarshana's tejas. Sudarshana in this allegory represents the Wheel of Time impelled by desire (*kama*) producing intent (*iccha*) and performance (*kriya*). The Wheel of Time brings everything it conceives to an end, just as the previous Panel E4 tells us through the three stories by which Valmiki brings the *Ramayana* to its end.

Kamadeva playing in Ketumala depicts the Pre-eminently Mighty formation's aishvarya sovereignty over the desire he instills. Pradyumna's lila as Govardhana Krishna evokes the story in the Krishnakatha in which Indra, king of devas and motivated by desire, acknowledges the sovereignty of Krishna with the title Govinda.

Finally, Ramadevi in the panel represents the bhakta's longing for formal consecration as Kamadeva's slave or servant through the vishnuhasta rite, the touch of the acharya's hand on the disciple's head. This confers a relationship to the Lord of Senses, preferred to all the majesty and wealth bestowed by the Shrivatsa on Vishnu's chest, for it satisfies all desires, even for the mukti Dhruva attains in Panel E2.

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15

The Vimana Panels on the Southern Side

The side facing south represents afternoon, beginning with midday at the southeast corner and ending with sunset at the southwest corner. Aniruddha the Unobstructed on the sanctum wall gazes through the central window of the enclosing vimana. Representations of his shakti or potency are on the vimana to his right (west), and representations of his tejas, or brilliant conquering power, are to his left (east). Aniruddha's shakti, when embodied as mantras, may function as arrows (*astra*) deployed in ceremony (*kriya*) intended to produce worldly pleasure (*bhukti*), or emancipation (*mukti*), or both. Ceremonies intended to produce bhukti alone are called prayoga, "the hurling or casting of missiles"; and in specific contexts, the Bhagavan holds the wheel or chakra as a prayogachakra, with its rim facing the viewer, as if about to throw it. The wheel, whose name is Sudarshana (Pleasing in Apearance), appears in ceremonies as the wheel or chakra mandala inscribed on a flat surface, usually temporarily.

Prayoga rites deploy mantra missiles against rakshasas, who come from the south to attack humans in the north, and against asuras, who come from the west to attack devas in the east. The samdhya or juncture of south and west combines rakshasa and asura threats during sunset's twilight, also called samdhya. Prayoga rites employ "language in the manner of twilight," as Alex Wayman translates *samdhyabhasha* (Wayman 1973: 130). These rites counter demonic threats from west and south to preserve amrita's prosperous longevity for devas in the east and humans in the north. Mohini holding the pot of amrita at the southwest corner of sunset signifies

the shakti or potency of these prayoga rites and illustrates ritual "language in the manner of twilight."

Bharata's ambiguous and compromised history told in Book Nine of the *Bhagavata Purana* may be described as written in samdhyabhasha. The south-facing panels represent afternoon moving toward evening twilight (*samdhya*), and, as we learned earlier (at Panel E3), twilight is a voluptuous woman, the object of asuras' eager desire (*lolupa*). As Wayman noted, twilight is a moment of ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox. In tantric sadhanas it symbolizes "the sensitive points in the temporal flow when spiritual victory was possible."

Stories of Bharata's history told "in the manner of twilight" express the ambiguity and paradox characteristic of the *Mahabharata* and of Krishna's "death" in life toward which Book Nine leads. Krishna gave three major teachings about life in the midst of shadows. During an inauspicious pause of great uncertainty as the Great War began, he taught Arjuna the "Bhagavan's Song" (*Bhagavad-gita*). Later, when a delirium of disorder was bringing the Dvapara Yuga to an end, he taught Uddhava "The Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" (*Brahmavadasya-samgraha*). Finally, just before he "died" through the absurd mistake of the hunter Old Age (Jara), he taught the *Bhagavatam*. All three teachings—the *Bhagavad-gita*, the *Brahmavadasya-samgraha*, and the *Bhagavatam*—are intended for devotees living in the impending darkness of the Kali Yuga, but Krishna taught them in the Dvapara Yuga, and south-facing panels therefore introduce them.

The two south-facing corner panels illustrate Dvapara Yuga "twlight" by stories told in "twilight language." They allude, for example, to stories of Trishanku, Harishchandra, Rohita, and Shunahshepa (*BP* 9.7), which contain such paradoxical and puzzling events as males becoming females, females becoming males, males as females giving birth, and males as males giving birth. They tell of Kshatriyas becoming Brahmins, Kshatriyas becoming Shudras, and seers being both Kshatriyas and Brahmins. And they tell of a Kshatriya disciple caught midway between earth and heaven by the rivalry of two Brahmin priests; his son and his wife, however, attain knowledge of atman by sacrificing a human substitute for their son in a shrauta ritual conducted by the two rival Brahmins.

The theme of a male who becomes a female appeared in east-facing panels (Panel E6); here facing south it continues through the story of the Kali Yuga's origin in a man's pretense at being pregnant. When Krishna's son Samba pretended to be pregnant, he and others taunted Brahmins and were cursed in return. Samba then gave birth to an iron pestle. It was ground up and thrown into the sea, only to emerge in reeds and in an iron lump swallowed by a fish. Once extracted from the fish, the iron lump became the arrowhead that pierced Krishna's ankle and "killed" him. The reeds containing iron became clubs with which Yadavas beat each other to death in a drunken brawl at the tirtha called

Splendor (Prabhasa). The demon Kali then emerged at Prabhasa to rule Bharata unobstructed (*BP* 11.1).

The Two Corner Panels

Panel S1: Dattatreya Sits with Soma and Durvasas

THE STORY. Chandra or Soma, Dattatreya, and Durvasas are avatars of portions (*amsha*) of the trimurti: The atman is the sustaining and pervasive Vishnu, the destroying ruler (Isha) is Shiva, and the self-transforming creator is Brahma (*BP* 4.1.15–33).[1] Their portions descended to Bharata during the first manvantara of our kalpa, while Svayambhuva Manu's children were populating the earth (*BP* 4.1.15–33) and filling the positions of planets and stars, including the days and hours they measure (*BP* 4.1; 6.6.1–2, 23–24). Svayambhuva Manu's granddaughter Anasuya gave them birth. Her husband Atri, in order to fulfill his duty to propagate, stood on one foot without food for a hundred years in the eastern Vindhyas near the Nirvindhya River (*BP* 4.1.17).[2] With his breath and mind under control, he took refuge in the Ruler of the Moving Universe (Jagadishvara) and asked for a son equal to the Ruler. When the tapas fire eventually emerged from the top of Atri's head to threaten the three worlds of rebirth (*tribhuvana*), the trimurti's splendid devas appeared to him, Brahma on the swan, Vishnu on the kite bird, and Shiva on the bull. Atri prostrated before the triad and begged for an explanation: "You are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and in every age (*yuga*) you assume forms through the 'threads' of maya to emanate, preserve, and dissolve. But I have been concentrating on only one Bhagavan. Why have all of you come?"

They replied: "We are the *brahman* of the true resolve (*satsankalpa*) you have envisioned (*dhyayati*). You will have three sons born from a portion (*amsha*) of each of us. They will be world-famous and will spread your name everywhere." In the context of Bharata, Atri learned, the Ruler of the Moving Universe is threefold; to equal him his wife had to produce triplets. Anasuya therefore gave birth to a portion of Brahma as Soma the Moon, to a portion of Vishnu the Knower of Yoga (*yogavid*) as Datta, and to a portion of Shiva as Durvasas.

Each of those devas corresponds to a dimension within the sadhaka. The seer Kapila identified Durvasas with the sense of "I" (*ahamkara*) and Chandra the Moon with mental activity (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*) (*BP* 3.26.60–61, 70). Datta, he said, represents the consciousness (*chitta*) of the Knower of the Field (*kshetrajna*) within the "heart" (*hridaya*), the atman that brings the body to life.[3] Atman's descent through Atri and Anasuya was named "He Gave" (Dattah) because, as he told Atri, "I gave (*datta*) myself as your son" (*BP* 2.7.4). Datta is commonly known as Dattatreya, "He Gave [Himself] through Atri."

Dattatreya's central position in the panel illustrates his preeminent status as the amsha avatara of the atman as Pervading Actor (Vishnu). He is famous for yoga and appears as a radical renunciant (*avadhuta*) two panels ahead (Panel S3). Kings worship him, notably Krishna's ancestor Yadu (whom we shall discuss at Panel S3) and Yadu's descendent, the Haihaya ruler named Arjuna, the son of Kritavirya, and therefore also known as Kartaviryarjuna (*BP* 2.7.4). Arjuna is the disciple of Dattatreya. Due to his guru's grace he is supreme in sacrifice, giving, asceticism, self-discipline, learning, prowess, and victory. He lives 85,000 years of pleasure and wealth, and has 1,000 arms and a might so great that he captures and imprisons ten-headed Ravana like a monkey in a cage. But out of arrogance Arjuna craves the wealth bestowed by Kamadhenu, the cow kept in the ashram of the Bhrigu rishi Jamadagni, whose youngest son Rama is a portion of Vasudeva. Arjuna steals the cow Kamadhenu and this leads Rama to slay Arjuna with his battle-axe (*parashu*), and Rama is therefore known as Parashurama, Rama with the Axe. Rama then slays Arjuna's 10,000 sons, except for five; they continue the Lunar Dynasty through the Madhavas, Vrishnis, and Yadavas, who produce the Satvata lineage to which Balarama and Krishna belong (*BP* 9.23.19–38; 9.24). Rama later attacks the Kshatriyas twenty-one times and slays them all except for Mulaka, who dresses as a woman and hides; he regenerates the Solar Dynasty (*BP* 9.9.40–41; 9.15–16.27).

In the *Markandeya Purana*, a Brahmin boy named Sumati tells this story of the three sons of Atri and Anasuya to his Bhrigu father, who until now believed him to be too stupid (*jada*) to learn the Vedas. But "Jada" Sumati actually remembers more than ten thousand births in all kinds of wombs, and possesses wisdom beyond any need for Vedic learning. He becomes his father's guru and teaches him about the processes of death and rebirth, and about Yama's Naraka realms of purgatory (*MP* 10–15). Jada tells his father the story about Soma, Dattatreya, and Durvasas in a way that differs little from the *Bhagavata Purana* account, except that he adds more information about Dattatreya. Jada says the he is such a great yogin that he has a wife, he has sexual intercourse with her, he drinks liquor with her, and he enjoys singing and music with her. But all the while he remains pure, just as Matarishvan the fire remains pure in the houses of corpse-burning chandalas (*MP* 16–17). Jada then tells his father about two of Dattatreya's royal devotees, one of whom is Kritavirya's son Arjuna, and the other is not King Yadu but a king named Alarka.

According to Jada, Arjuna agrees to assume the throne after his father dies only if he can protect his realm with the power of a yogin. In order to gain this power, the sage Garga tells him to worship Dattatreya; he explains why with the story of Indra and his devas after they had been defeated by the asura named Jambha. After this defeat Indra goes for help to Dattatreya's ashram, where he finds gandharvas singing to the great yogin as he sits eating and drinking with Goddess Lakshmi. When Indra venerates Dattatreya and asks

him to defeat Jambha on his behalf, Dattatreya asks why devas think he can help since he drinks alcohol, eats food, consorts with a woman, and is impure—even though he knows all things and is even-minded at all times. Indra protests that in fact Dattatreya is a sinless Brahmin, and that Lakshmi is the mother of the world and pure as the sun. This pleases Dattatreya, and he tells the devas to bring him Jambha and the asuras. When the asuras arrive and see the beautiful Lakshmi seated to Dattatreya's left their lust blazes up, they forget their deva enemies, and they decide to take the Goddess away with them in a palanquin carried on their heads. Lakshmi sits down inside the palanquin, the asuras place it on their heads, and instantly Dattatreya renders them impotent—for they have touched another man's wife—and the devas slay them all. Lakshmi flies back to Dattatreya and Indra returns to heaven. This, Garga concludes, is why Arjuna should worship Dattatreya for the sake of sovereignty unequaled by anyone.

Arjuna follows Garga's advice. He goes to Dattatreya's ashram, affirms that Dattatreya is sinless, and that his Brahmin wife Lakshmi is the path of all existence. Dattatreya is pleased. The yogin tells Arjuna that whoever worships him and Lakshmi with offerings of meat, liquor, and sweets, accompanied by songs and music, and venerates Brahmins, will receive his worldly blessings and protection. He offers Arjuna a boon. Kritavirya's son asks for many things, including universal and prosperous sovereignty, the dexterity of a thousand arms, death from a superior man, and unwavering faith in Dattatreya. Arjuna receives it all. He assumes his father's throne as the sole protector of his realm and the only man who wields a weapon (*MP* 18–19).

Jada's next lesson to his father is about the king named Alarka. In the *Bhagavata Purana*, Alarka descends through Pururavas from the portion of Vasudeva named Dhanvantari, who brings amrita during the Churning of the Milk Ocean, and Alarka is uniquely famous for ruling 66,000 years with the freshness of youth (*BP* 9.17.1–7). In Jada's account he is the fourth and youngest son of Kuvalayashva and his wife Madalasa. Kuvalayashva loves Madalasa, but before they can marry she dies. Shiva's grace, however, gives her rebirth in her same form as daughter of the naga named Ashvatara ruling in Patala under Earth (*MP* 20–24). Madalasa, now the daughter of the naga Ashvatara, marries Kavalayashva and they have four sons. She teaches the first three about the impermanent nature of the body, and none of them wants to be a householder obligated to perform its numerous required ceremonies. Kuvalayashva thus has no heir to the throne, so he urges his wife to teach their fourth son not how to be a renouncer but how to be householder, and a ruler who nourishes his pitri ancestors. Madalasa dutifuilly teaches their son Alarka three subjects: the dharma of ritual class and stage of life; the ritual duties of the householder, with special attention to shraddha rites for the pitri ancestors of various types; and the proper behavior for each day, concluding with shraddha rites again (*MP* 25–35).

Alarka follows his mother's teaching, marries, begets children, and when his father dies assumes the throne. But his mother gives him one final instruction inscribed on a gold ring, and tells him to read it when the pain of loss intrinsic to the householder life becomes intolerable. Alarka rules with righteousness (*dharma*) and prosperity (*artha*), but becomes overly attached to pleasure (*kama*). His brother Subahu contrives to teach him a lesson by having the king of Kashi join him in attacking Alarka's realm. This joint assault causes Alarka intolerable losses, and he reads the gold ring. It advises him to seek relief in Dattatreya. He does this, and Dattatreya teaches him the falsity of the thought "This is mine" and "This am I"; he also instructs him in the practice of yoga. Alarka gives his kingdom to his son and leaves to seek emancipation in the forest. Jada concludes this story by advising his father to follow Alarka's example. Father and son then become sannyasins (*MP* 36–44).

THE PANEL. The tripartite horizontal and vertical divisions of this badly damaged panel signal Aniruddha the Unobstructed as the third formation (Figure 15.1). The scene portrays Dattatreya seated in the middle of three horizontal levels, his brother Soma to his right and his brother Durvasas to his left. Each has one pair of arms and sits in the royal posture of ease with one leg pendent. Dattatreya, slightly taller than his brothers, is the axis of the panel, and faces directly south as the center of attention. The foot of his pendent left leg rests on a footstool carried on the head of a short plump male. He forms badly damaged mudras with his hands at his chest. Soma and Durvasas turn toward Dattatreya in mirroring postures: one leg is pendent and the foot of the other leg rests on Dattatreya's footstool; one hand rests on the seat and the other hand forms a badly damaged mudra at the chest.

At the bottom level of the panel are four males with one pair of arms each. The *Markandeya Purana* account provides their identities. Two males dressed royally and crowned stand on each side of the fraternal triad, the king Arjuna son of Kritavirya beneath Soma's right arm, and the royal rishi Alarka beneath Durvasas's left arm. They are in mirrored postures: Both gaze upward toward Dattatreya, gesture toward him with an open hand, and rest the other hand on a hip. Alarka's Bhrigu Brahmin father kneels on his right knee beneath Soma's foot; he holds the anjalimudra as he listens to the teaching of his son, Jada Sumati, who is depicted as an ascetic with tied-up matted hair. He sits in a cross-legged posture beneath Durvasas's foot and gestures upward toward Dattatreya with his open right hand.

The upper level of the panel portrays three males flying. The one directly above the head of Dattatreya emphasizes the panel's vertical axis: He emerges from behind Dattatreya's head and looks slightly downward with the anjalimudra. The figure flying to his right raises his open left hand high in a salute of praise, and the figure to his left positions both hands at the level of his chest with indistinct gestures.



FIGURE 15.1. Panel S1: Dattatreya sits with Soma and Durvasas. IFDI.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The three males on the panel—Soma, Dattatreya, Durvasas—direct us to the stories of the Solar and Lunar dynasties introduced in the previous depiction of Ilavrita. They are the contents of Books Nine, Ten, and Eleven of the *Bhagavata Purana*, and assume a knowledge of the wars of the *Ramayana* and of the *Mahabharata*, themselves repetitions on Bharata of the persistent wars between the devas and asuras. More precisely, the *Ramayana* tells of a north-south conflict: the rakshasa kin of the asuras in southern Lanka led by Ravana oppose humans in northern Ayodhya led by Vishnu incarnated in four brothers. The *Mahabharata*, however, tells of an east-west conflict: Asuras as the one hundred sons of "blind darkness" oppose devas as the five sons of the "moon's pale light." Vishnu intervened in the *Ramayana* to achieve a decisive victory and a rule of 11,000 years, whereas in the *Mahabharata*, Vasudeva himself appeared as Krishna to guide the five Pandavas. Yet his victory, fraught with ambiguity and compromise, was less decisive than Rama's; ambiguity and compromise appear in all the stories of the south-facing panels.

This panel signifies the tejas of Aniruddha the Unobstructed, Vasudeva's third formation. It also signifies the instrumental value of this tejas for the king, who is the paradigmatic householder for his realm. As in the case of Dattatreya with Goddess Lakshmi, this tejas is beyond the categories of pure and impure; and as in the case of Arjuna, the king can use it to rule with sovereign power for good or for ill. Moreover, this panel represents the value of dharma, artha, and kama in the householder way of life, and the householder's importance to future generations entangled in samsara. Among the householder's duties it emphasizes shraddha rites, whose offerings to the pitri ancestors are made in the afternoon represented by this southern side of the vimana (*MP* 34.74).

The panel thus alludes to collections (*samhita*) of the Pancharatra Agama that teach the application of mantras to practical matters of living (*prayoga*). Brahma in the form of Soma the Moon (or Chandra) points to the *Padma-samhita*; Brahma learned it at the beginning of the Padma Kalpa from Narayana as Keshava, and taught it to Kapila (*BP* 3.4.13; *PS* 1.1–34; Smith 1975: 199). Rudra Shiva in the form of Durvasas points to the teaching Durvasas overheard when Rudra as "serpent of the deep" (*ahirbudhnya*) taught Narada the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita*. Shaiva tantrics regard Durvasas as teacher of Shivajnana, who divided the Shaiva Agama into three lineages: Tryambaka (monism), Amardaka (dualism), and Shrinatha (monism-cum-dualism) (Smith 1975: 44; Davis n.d.). Vishnu in the form of Dattatreya in the middle represents the *Paushkara-samhita*, one of the oldest agamas of the Pancharatra, classified along with the *Satvata-samhita* and the *Jayakhya-samhita* as one of "three gems." The *Paushkara-samhita* is relevant to the acharya's consecration (*Paushkara-samhita* 1.1–32; Smith 1975: 278; 295–296).

Early inscriptional evidence for the worship of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva as the "triad of material forms" (*trimurti*) comes from the Pallava realm in the first half of the seventh century.[4] The panel depicts the Bhagavata version of the Trimurti to introduce the Bharata region during the seventh manvantara in which we live under the rule of Manu Vaivasvata, the son of Sun. As we recall, Vaivasvata was the rebirth of the Pandya king Satyavrata, whom Fish rescued at the end of the previous kalpa. According to *Paushkara-samhita* 36, Satyavrata was also a name for Kanchipuram (Smith 1975: 290). Specific events in Kanchipuram during Nandivarman's rule may be among the many meanings of this and following south-facing panels.

This panel also represents the solution to the inevitable pain of the householder life. As in the case of Alarka's three brothers, the yogin's perception of the distinction between matter (*prakriti*) and soul (*purusha*) extinguishes any concern for the continuation of death and birth in samsara. As the rishi Kapila explains in the *Bhagavata Purana*, the three sons of Atri and Anasuya represent dimensions of consciousness within the sadhaka: Dattatreya is the consciousness (*chitta*) of the atman within the heart; this consciousness brings the material body to life and is the basis for its other dimensions. Soma is mental activity (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*). Durvasas is the ego awareness, "This am I" (*BP* 3.26.60–61; 70). The panel depicts these relationships visually: Dattatreya is the atman's consciousness placed in the center as the basis for the Soma mind and intellect to his right, and for the Durvasas ego to his left.

Aside from the central role of Dattatreya, Durvasas and Soma are significant to the Dvapara Yuga of this southern side, and to the concerns of afternoon twilight leading to the Kali Yuga on the side of the mandala facing west. Durvasas's curse leads to the churning of the Milk Ocean, the emergence of Dhanvantari with amrita, and the appearance of Mohini depicted at the southwest corner (*BP* 8.5.16). Durvasas gives the mantras to Vasudeva's sister, Pritha or Kunti, which leads to the Great War of the *Mahabharata* (*MBh* 1.104–115; van Buitenen 1: 240–259). Durvasas uses his skill in improper abhichara rites directed against King Ambarisha, but when this backfires he learns the importance to ritual performance of the protective power of the wheel Sudarshana (*BP* 9.4–5). Durvasas learns more about Sudarshana when he overhears Rudra teach Narada about this wheel, as related in the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama (Smith 1975: 43–44).[5]

The panel also appears to gloss the story of Arjuna son of Kritavirya as told in the *Bhagavata Purana*. In that account, Arjuna possesses 1,000 arms and is slain by Parashurama. But in the *Markandeya Purana* account illustrated here, Arjuna has two arms and asks for "the dexterity of a thousand arms," and for "death from a superior man." This telling assumes that the audience already knows the account in the *Bhagavata Purana*, and that the "superior man" is Parashurama. It suggests a metaphorical interpretation of Arjuna's 1,000 arms, and of the entire Parashurama story.

This panel also encodes the end of the Krishna story. Chandra the Moon alludes to the bathing place (*tirtha*) called Prabhasa (Splendor) on the western coast, for Moon bathed there to be freed of periodic wasting away (*BP* 11.6.34–38). This is why the tirtha is known as Splendor, but it is a twilight splendor, because Prabhasa is where the Yadavas destroyed themselves, Balarama and Krishna "died," the Lunar Dynasty disappeared, and where the asura Kali took over Bharata for the Kali Yuga represented ahead on the west.[6] The panel thus introduces the south-facing side as the Dvapara Yuga "afternoon" leading to the Kali Yuga "nighttime" facing to the west.

Panel S6: Mohini Serves the Devas Amrita as the Asuras Watch

THE STORY. The story of Mohini feeding amrita to devas ends the churning of the Ocean of Milk episode (*BP* 8.5–12), which began with a curse Durvasas put on Indra. As narrated at the panel of the Milk Ocean churning on the middle floor (Panel 7), once the amrita appeared in Dhanvantari's hands, an asura snatched it, leaving devas to appeal for help to Vishnu. He appeared in the form of the woman who infatuates males (Mohini). That event is crucial to the churning story and plays not only on asura sexual passion but also on Shiva's (*BP* 8.8–9, 12).

After asuras obtained the amrita they started to quarrel over who would drink it first (*BP* 8.8.38–40). Weaker asuras feared they would get nothing and argued that devas should get a share too. The Pervading Actor (Vishnu), ruler of the knowledge of all means, then appeared as a stunning and alluring female who aroused heated passion in the asuras' minds (*BP* 8.8.41–46).

In a scene evoking Twilight's first appearance to asuras (Panel E3), the asuras exclaimed over her beauty (*BP* 8.9.1–7) and asked her to divide the amrita between them and devas to avoid future disputes between Kashyapa's two lineages. Mohini cunningly asked, "Why do you trust me, a courtesan who solicits men? No lasting relationship can be formed with women who always look for new experiences in sex" (*BP* 8.9.9–10). Reassured by those enticing remarks, the asuras laughed knowingly and handed her the jar of amrita. With a smile she said, "If you agree to whatever I do, whether you think it holy or unholy (*sadhu-asadhu*), only then will I distribute it." Without further thought the asuras agreed.

Devas and asuras now prepared themselves ritually for the distribution (*BP* 8.9.14–15).[7] They fasted and bathed, offered oblations into the fire, distributed food to cows, to Brahmins, and to other beings, and had Brahmins bless them. The donned gorgeous new clothes and sat on kusha grass with the ends pointing to the east. Hari as the sensually enticing courtesan then appeared. In Tapasyananda's words, "Into the hall now entered that handsome

woman with vase-like breasts, holding the Amrita jar in hand. A brilliant cloth of silk draped the lower part of her body. Her tread was slow, and her eyes unsteady as if under inebriation, and the sweet sounds of her tinkling anklets announced her slow movement. As the Devas and Asuras smiled and looked carefully at that female form assumed by the Deity to match Sri Herself, they were stupefied with excitement to see her face illumined by ear ornaments and beautified by her handsome cheeks, ears and nose, and her torso from which the end of her clothes covering the breasts had slipped down" (*BP* 8.9.17–18; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 2: 333).

The master of the moving universe (*jagatpati*) organized the asuras and devas into separate rows. She then walked through the rows of asuras with the pot of amrita and beguiled them with her eyebrows, her bashful smiles, the play of her clothes and ornaments, and her flattering words; all the while, however, she was feeding amrita to the devas sitting at a distance. The asuras kept their pledge not to object, because they desired her and because they thought it demeaning to quarrel with a woman.

But one asura named Svarbhanu sneaked into the midst of the devas, sat down between Sun and Moon, and drank a portion of amrita. Sun and Moon immediately found him out and revealed his identity. Hari cut off Svarbhanu's head with the Sudarshana wheel, but since he had already drunk amrita, his head was now "immortal." It became the celestial "grasper" (*graha*) named Rahu, who in revenge attacks Sun and Moon as eclipses, but is invariably frightened away by Sudarshana (*BP* 8.9.24–27).[8] Having now attained his goal, the sustainer of the world resumed his own shape (*rupa*) before the asuras and departed on Garuda (*BP* 8.9.27–29; 8.10.1–2).[9]

After Shuka told the story of Mohini's distribution of amrita to devas, he told of Indra's defeat of Bali, and then of Shiva's encounter with Mohini. When that Ruler of Mountains (*girisha*) heard that Mohini had infatuated asuras, he went on his bull with Devi and his bhutas to the dwelling place of the Slayer of Deluded Passion (*madhusudana*); that place corresponds to this western half of the vimana facing south (*BP* 8.12.1–11).[10] Hari welcomed them warmly, seated them, and graciously heard Shiva's request. The Great God (*mahadeva*) first praised Hari with a metaphysical statement of his transcendent identity and then stated his reason for coming (*BP* 8.12.4–11). He had seen the Bhagavan's many avatars in the past, Shiva said, and now would like to see the form in which he completely infatuated (*sammohita*) asuras. With a smile, the Bhagavan Vishnu said he would show him the form that excites those who have erotic desire (*kama*), a form that is to be greatly respected by those resolved to arouse it (*BP* 8.12.16). Vishnu then disappeared.

Shiva stood with Uma and at first saw nothing. Then a garden of blossoming trees appeared, and its midst a woman was playing with a ball. In Tapasyananda's words,

> She had the noble appearance of a high-born lady, was dressed in silk, and had a golden girdle round her waist. As she took each step with her tender legs while pursuing the up and down movements of the ball, now stooping, now lifting up her body, it appeared that her slender middle region would break under the weight of her tremulous breasts and the precious pearl necklaces on her neck. The pupils of her long and quivering eyes moved excitedly and fast in pursuit of the unpredictable ball straying in different directions and the beauty of her face was enhanced by her bluish curls and by the luminous reflection of her ear-pendant on her smooth cheeks. The inherent charm she displayed as she held her loosening cloth and braids with her handsome left hand while striking the ball with the other, was sufficient to blind the whole world with excitement. (*BP* 8.12.18–21)

She glanced at Shiva seductively, and he was completely overwhelmed, forgetting even Uma and the bhutas. The woman suddenly started to chase the ball and the wind blew away her light garment. Shiva was now transfixed and sexually aroused. While Uma watched, he ran toward the woman as she ran bashfully into the trees. In hot pursuit, Shiva was kama's slave and no longer able to control his senses. He grabbed the woman's hair and embraced her against her will, covering her as a bull elephant covers its mate. But she was maya. She struggled, released herself, and despite her heavy hips ran on with disheveled hair. Still overwhelmed by kama, Shiva pursued the running Vishnu of marvelous deeds, as a bull follows a cow in heat, and his potent semen (*retas*) fell on the ground as he ran. Wherever it fell it turned into gold and silver ore. Shiva chased her on the banks of rivers and lakes, on mountains, and in forests and gardens, wherever seers live. When he had ejaculated all his semen and recovered from his infatuation, Shiva realized that God's maya (*devamaya*) had completely deluded him. But he was not surprised, for he knew that the atman of the moving universe (*jagadatman*) was his own atman.

The Slayer of Deluded Passion (*madhusudana*) as Mohini saw that Shiva felt no remorse or shame and was pleased. He resumed his male form to praise him: "Although you were completely infatuated by my maya in a woman's form, you have resumed your normal freedom from passion. Who else can do that? This maya shall never again overpower you." With that blessing, Shiva and his hosts circumambulated the Bhagavan with the shrivatsa on his chest and returned to Kailasa. There Shiva reminded Bhavani that she had once asked him whom he had meditated on for a thousand years in yoga. "It is he," Shiva now explained, "the ancient Person beyond Time and beyond Veda" (*BP* 8.12.41–44).

THE PANEL. The panel is divided into vertical halves, with devas occupying the entire eastern half and Mohini and asuras the western half (Figure 15.2).



FIGURE 15.2. Panel S6: Mohini serves the Devas amrita as the asuras watch (prior to repair). IFDI.

Mohini nevertheless dominates the scene, for the panel's central axis runs along her left side, and she is the largest figure. Mohini wears a crown and turns slightly toward the east, her knees bent, and her left foot placed behind her right foot in a graceful serving posture. She has one pair of arms. Her left hand holds the pot of amrita at the level of her waist as her right hand grasps its top. She looks directly south at the viewer while tilting her head slightly eastward. Mohini's full breasts and wide hips reveal her delusive sensuousness as a pumshchali or harlot dazzling asuras.

Three asuras aligned vertically crowd the panel's edge on Mohini's right (west). At the top stands the crowned asura king Bali, and at the bottom sits an asura waiting to be fed. Devas sit in rows to Mohini's left (east) and face directly south. The middle figure at the bottom sits with his hands in his lap to receive the amrita. He may be the asura Svarbhanu, who will become the graha Rahu; if so, the two devas sitting slightly behind him are Soma to his right (west) and Surya to his left (east). Above these three stand two devas wearing crowns; the tallest is Indra's. A male above him appears to hold the anjalimudra to articulate Indra's veneration of Mohini. Above Mohini, a male whose left arm and hand are obliterated similarly articulates her act of serving amrita; his right hand appears to form the mushtimudra (mudra of the fist), which has the same shape as the balimudra (mudra of power or mudra of offering): the fingers bend to the palm and the thumb curls over the forefinger (*PS* 1974: 46 and 107). This mudra refers to the amrita contents of the pot Mohini holds in her hands, for the amrita is the bali, the powerful offering that is shakti or potency.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. The three vertical divisions of this panel (asuras, Mohini, and devas) signify Aniruddha, Vasudeva's third formation.

Mohini depicted here at the corner of sunset signifies this formation's shakti, the potency of mantras employed in prayoga ceremonies to defeat rakshasas and asuras and preserve the "immortality" of prosperous longevity for devas and for humans. Furthermore, Mohini at this western corner of the mandala's southern side complements Dattatreya at its eastern corner. Both transcend the sensuality by which they bestow worldly blessings, but in differing ways. Dattatreya uses his siddhi powers as a perfected yogin to confer tejas on universal sovereigns such as Arjuna and Alarka, yet remains pure and even-minded throughout. Mohini uses her own lolupa body of eager desire instrumentally to manipulate asura lust and preserve deva prosperity, but she never desires.

Mohini serving amrita to devas illustrates in part Krishna's statement at the end of his "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" represented on this southern side by Panel S3. Krishna tells Uddhava, "This is the intelligent judgment of the wise and prudent, that one reaches Me, the True One, the Immortal One, by means of a false mortal [body] here [in this world]" (*BP*

11.29.22). Mohini in this panel depicts Vishnu's skill in means: By means of his maya he manipulates the lust of the householder's false mortal body to attain bhukti for him, and perhaps also mukti.

The panel ends the afternoon period begun by the southeast corner panel. The two previous panels, S4 and S5, denote periods in the afternoon leading to twilight, as we shall see, and the Mohini story alludes back to early and late afternoon. Shuka identified those afternoon periods through the Bhagavan's murti names. Vishnu, which he used in the churning of the Milk Ocean, denotes the Tamil month Chittirai (Chitra), which corresponds to early afternoon. Madhusudana, which he used in telling of Mohini's seduction of Shiva, denotes the month Vaikachi (Vaisakha), which corresponds to mid-afternoon.[11] Mohini herself depicts the evening twilight.

Mohini in the shape of Twilight at this sunset corner evokes "language in the manner of twilight" or samdhyabhasha, a subject we introduced at the beginning of this chapter. At twilight an object may appear to be both what it is and something else altogether; a winding crack in a walkway may look like a snake. Similarly, "language in the manner of twilight" uses a word, instruction, or object to mean one thing in one context, and something else in another. The meaning depends upon the context of the performance—is it in the afternoon or at night? This twilight panel represents both possibilities. The story illustrated by this southwest corner panel, like the corner panel depicting Dattatreya with Soma and Durvasas, uses "language in the manner of twilight" to say many things at the same time.

As discussed at Panel E3, Twilight (*samdhya*) embodies Brahma's erotic thoughts and feelings which caused him to "ejaculate" asuras from his loins. Twilight is a "terrible" (*ghora*) state of mind, one of eager desire (*lolupa*); possessing eager desire as their nature, asuras sought sexual union (*maithuna*) with Brahma their father (*BP* 3.20.23). When Brahma abandoned that "terrible" state of mind, it appeared as alluring Twilight, and asuras took her as their own. Similarly, when Mohini appeared to the asuras, she appeared as Twilight.[12] Mohini here at the southwest thus signifies eager desire (*lolupa*) which agitates and overwhelms deluded minds as twilight leads into night.

An example of the use of "the language of twilight" is a refernce to "churning." In the story of the churning of the Milk Ocean, which this Mohini panel concludes, the appearance of amrita, Mohini's play with the asuras' eager desire (*lolupa*), and her seduction of Shiva denote powerful but "unholy" aspects of prayoga.

In the last hour of night, mantra employed through disciplined breath control (*pranayama*) during visualization (*dhyana*) is "churning." In predawn sadhana, breath control (*pranayama*) takes place after the sadhaka has divinized himself or herself through nyasa, a gesture of the right hand used to place Sudarshana in mantra form on various parts of the body. By means of nyasa, the sadhaka's body is made into God's body in order to visualize God

beyond the body. The transformation appears to be this: Through nyasa the gross body becomes Brahma's gross body of spacetime, with Meru as the spinal column; the subtle body's central axis becomes Mandara churned by Vishnu; and consciousness permeating the subtle body becomes the Ocean infused with the Milk of mantra. The sadhaka's pranayama using mantra to lead to dhyana is Vishnu's churning of the Milk Ocean.

But in the first hour of night, pranayama using mantra and dhyana during sexual intercourse denotes "churning." In this case, the male "churns" the female while using pranayama, mantra, and dhyana to transform eager desire (*lolupa*) into the instrumental means to obtain properous longevity (*amrita*). Early detailed descriptions of the rites appear in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (6.4); and the *Chandogya Upanishad* (2.13) teaches the "*Vamadevya Saman* woven upon sexual intercourse," which leads to a full life span of prosperity and honor.

Moreover, this Mohini panel appears to allude to a well-known example of the type of ceremony commonly called tantric; it uses five offerings beginning in Sanskrit with the letter M, panchamakara. These offerings are called mamsa, matsya, mudra, madya, and maithuna. They literally mean flesh, fish, gram, wine, and coupling. Panchamakara ceremonies performed in a Bhagavata context in the recent past by the king of Puri in Orissa, as discussed by Frederique Marglin, open up possible hidden meanings of this panel (Marglin 1985; Hudson and Marglin 2002: 111–122). The king of Puri's royal acharya supervised the afternoon panchamakara ceremony in the Jagannatha Temple, where Krishna as Lord of the Moving Universe and his brother Balarama and his sister Subhadra reside in icons carved of wood. The royal acharya performed the nighttime ceremony secretly, somewhere in the temple, or outside of it in a cremation ground or somewhere else.

The afternoon ceremony was meant for the welfare of the kingdom. It consisted of a vegetarian meal offered to Jagannatha accompanied by the dance of a devadasi, who faced south, as Mohini does here. In this meal, mamsa was a rice preparation, matsya was a vegetable dish, mudra was gram flour cakes, and madya was coconut milk. Maithuna was the "leavings of shakti," vaginal drops that fell from the devadasi onto the ground while she danced. The nighttime ceremony was meant for goals specific to the king of Puri and was quite different. It was a nonvegetarian meal prepared and offered secretly. In this meal, mamsa was meat, matsya was fish, mudra was a gram preparation, and madya was wine. Maithuna was sexual fluid drawn by the acharya from a young woman and called "amrita." The acharya mixed this "amrita" with the meat, fish, gram, and wine, placed the mixture in a conch shell called the Shri Patra, and added to it a bit of blood from a girl's first menstruation. By means of mantras, the acharya made the Shri Patra conch shell the residence of Dakshinakalika, the Goddess whose name means Kalika of the South, or perhaps Kalika Facing South.

The acharya then dressed as a beautiful woman in a red sari, not unlike a courtesan who resembles Mohini. In this female guise the acharya evoked the tejas of Dakshinakalika from the Shri Patra conch and placed it onto a yantra. "She" then worshiped this tejas enthroned on the yantra with meat and wine offerings. Afterwards "she" fed pairs of men and women as "Viras" and "Shaktis" seated as a chakra wheel. This secret ceremony ended when all had worshiped the Goddess. It was believed that if this ceremony were performed correctly, the Goddess would deploy her tejas on behalf of the sponsoring king.

The panchamakara performances in Puri suggest three meanings hidden in this Mohini panel.[13]

1. Mohini's graceful posture, facing south holding the amrita pot, evokes the devadasi, who likewise faces south during the afternoon meal offering, dancing as the panchamakara's fifth component called maithuna.
2. Mohini's beauty also evokes the acharya, who at night dresses as a beautiful woman and worships Dakshinakalika residing in "her" amrita pot called the Shri Patra.
3. Dakshinakalika residing in this Shri Patra, which the amrita pot at the visual center of this panel represents, is the potent shakti from which conquering tejas will emerge. We learn this from the *Devi Mahatmyam*. Vishnu's maya takes shape as Parvati. When Parvati turns her gross material kosha or sheath into Kaushiki, the golden Goddess known as Chandika and Durga, she turns dark. This dark Parvati now dwells in the Himalayas as Kalika (*DM* 5. 83–89; Coburn 1991: 5.37–41). Kalika's presence in the Himalayas explains Dakshinakalika to mean Kalika facing south, for she faces southward to protect Bharata. She is the potent shakti; the golden Chandka Durga who emerges from her is the conquering tejas.

The Mohini panel also alludes ahead to the next sequence of panels. The churning itself refers to Tortoise as represented by the panel around the corner (Panel W1); he held up the Mandara mountain while Vishnu churned the ocean. When lords of progeny asked Shiva to swallow the Kalakuta poison, they referred to his destruction of Daksha's sacrifice; that story appears in the first panel on the porch (Panel SP1). The porch's next two panels (Panels SP2 and SP3) probably depicted the lords of progeny's similar allusions to Shiva's destruction of Tripura and his burning of Kama, but one panel is missing and the other is damaged, and no unambiguous symbol identifies it.

The Mohini panel, moreover, alludes twice to the last south-facing panel at the porch's southwest corner (Panel SP4). It depicts Upendra, Dwarf as Indra's younger brother. One allusion is through the sequence of manvantaras. The churning of the ocean occurred in the sixth manvantara when Indra defeated Bali; that defeat led to Bali's conquest of Indra, which in turn led to the

appearance of Dwarf in the seventh manvatara. The other allusion is through the sequence of times that follow the late afternoon and evening. The murtis Trivikrama and Vamana represent sunset and early night. Both murti names refer to Dwarf (Vamana) as the one who made three strides (Trivikrama), measured out spacetime, and pushed Bali down into the nether worlds. After this Dwarf was honored as Upendra.

This last south-facing panel on the vimana (Panel S6) represents evening twilight to complement morning twilight on the north-facing corner panel diagonally opposite (Panel N1). Similarly, the first period of night denoted by the Upendra panel at the porch's southwest corner (Panel SP3) complements the night's final period (*brahmamuhurta*) denoted by the Hayagriva panel directly opposite on the northwest corner (Panel NP1).

The Four Bracketed Panels

Panel S2: Krishna in Dvaraka Teaches Uddhava the "Summary of the Brahman Doctrine"

Two panels illustrate Krishna's long "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" (*Brahmavadasya-samgraha*): Krishna stands teaching Uddhava at Dvaraka (Panel S2), and Dattatreya as avadhuta stands teaching Yadu in the forest (Panel S3). The "Summary" (*BP* 11.6–29) alludes to other texts: to the earlier "Song of the Bhagavan" (*Bhagavad-gita*) that Krishna taught Arjuna on the Kuru field of dharma, to the *Bhagavatam* that Krishna taught Uddhava just before he died at Prabhasa (*BP* 3–4), and to the *Padma-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama. H. Daniel Smith described the last as the Pancharatra text most widely used today and a complete introduction into "the intricacies of Pancharatra thought and practice" (Smith 1975: 197, 242). A coherent understanding of Bhagavata Dharma will include all four texts, but there is a hermeneutical problem arising from Krishna's preference for the "invisible language" (*paroksha*) seers used for Veda's "doctrine of the invisible" (*parokshvada*). That doctrine teaches *brahman* and atman in three topical categories (*BP* 11.21.35). Krishna's preference matches "language in the manner of twilight," which means that in these south-facing panels, nothing is quite what it seems. Our best course, therefore, is to pursue the hints narratives and statements offer regarding their "invisible" (*paroksha*) content.

The *Padma-samhita*, for example, is "invisibly" connected to the "Great Romance" and to the Mantrasiddhanta Path in the following manner.[14] Keshava taught the *Padma-samhita* to Brahma, and it passed on in increasingly condensed forms to Kapila, to Padma in Patala, and to Samvarta at Kanva's ashram. Samvarta was the son of Aurva who taught at Prabhasa. Samvarta thus connects Kanva to Prabhasa and to the *Padma-samhita* (*Jayakhya-samhita* 1; Smith 1975: 114). The seer Kanva of the Lunar Dynasty was the foster father of

Shakuntala, the mother of the famous emperor Bharata (*BP* 9.20.6–33), but he was also the father of a daughter named Indivaraprabha by the apsaras Menaka (Mani 1984: 176). Indivaraprabha married King Chandravaloka, father of Taravaloka, of the "Great Romance." Indivaraprabha and Chandravaloka appear in that vast ocean of stories in a tale told by a vampire (*vetala*) in a cemetery at midnight to gain the status of a vidyadhara (van Buitenen 1959: 48–58). He told of a Brahmin boy who, just before he was sacrificed to a demon at the foot of a tree, laughed because he perceived the self-deception the body created—a statement of the south-facing perspective on tamas and death. Krishna, "slain" in Prabhasa at the foot of a tree shortly after he taught the *Bhagavatam*, was famous for a smile born of the same insight (*BG* 2.10).

According to the *Padma-samhita*, among the linages (*gotra*) of seers ardently seeking moksha, the Kanva branch, along with the Madhyandina branch, received consecration to the Mantrasiddhanta Path (*marga*), one of four taught by Brahma.[15] Those who followed the Mantrasiddhanta Path apparently were Brahmins; they were consecrated to the sadhana of the "Wheel and Lotus Mandala" (*chakrabjamandala*), performed their own modes of the soma sacrifice and other rites, and had their own modes of visualizing and worshiping the Bhagavan, all without the desire for fruits (*PS* 4.21.2–12; 4.25–29; Smith 1975: 235–240). Moreover, the *Padma-samhita* listed among the most precious Pancharatra "gems" a text called the *Kanva-tantra* (*PS* 4.33.203–204; Smith 1975: 242). The Pancharatra liturgists in Nandivarman's imperial court were probably Brahmins of the Kanva branch who followed the Mantrasiddhanta Path and delighted in Shiva's "Great Romance."

THE STORY. Shuka told the story of Krishna teaching Uddhava as part of his longer explanation of how Krishna "died," his Yadava clan destroyed itself, and the Kali Yuga began. The narrative context of the panel is a visit Brahma and Shiva and other divine beings paid to Krishna in Dvaraka (*BP* 11.6.1–39). In this context, Shuka referred to him as Govinda, who had lived 125 years and had accomplished the purposes of his descent (*BP* 11.6.20. 11.6.25; 11.22.35). Due to a curse from Brahmins elicited by Samba, the Yadavas were now about to destroy themselves, and Brahma and Shiva had come to ask Krishna to return to his transcendent realm.

When they addressed Krishna, Brahma and Shiva connected the three of them to the transformed Trimurti of the previous panel (*BP* 11.6.7–19). They praised him as the source of their own functions, the Bhagavan himself, the controller of the three gunas who creates, protects, and destroys the manifest universe within himself through maya, yet is unaffected by those acts because of his own inherent pleasure (*sukha*). Nothing, they said, purifies the mind like listening to his glory.

Then they directed their veneration to Krishna's feet, which, they said, six kinds of worshipers seek. Munis seek them in the seat of consciousness

(*hridaya*) moist with love, as do prudent Satvatas desiring similarity with the four vyuhas in the manifestation of great power (*vibhuti*). The reflective (*chittah*), who worship three times a day to transcend heaven, seek his feet, as do sacrificers who follow three Vedas and think of the Trimurti while holding oblations for the fire in their hands. Yogins, who practice self-discipline to comprehend and control their own maya, also seek his feet, as do those who are supreme among Bhagavatas (*paramabhagavata*) (*BP* 11.6.10–11). Those six types of worshipers are discussed in Appendix 1.

Brahma and Shiva then addressed Krishna's feet with their own requests. They asked that they purify them of their sins, just as they had encouraged devas and frightened asuras when they took three strides and brought Ganga into the world. They asked that they bring them well-being, for Krishna is the Supreme Person (Purushottama), the Ruler of purusha and prakriti who controls all contentious beings from great Brahma down to the smallest being, just as cowherds control contentious cattle through strings in their noses (*BP* 11.6.13–14). As Dattatreya's middle position in the corner panel states, he controls Brahma and Shiva from within.

Brahma and Shiva praised Krishna as the material cause, the instrumental cause, and as Time–as the year with three seasons. He conceives the universe within himself, and as Ruler of Senses (Hrishikesha) is not entangled in the senses even when he enjoys the pleasures of his more than 16,000 wives. Two tirthas purifying sin flow from his feet, they concluded, the stories of his deeds and the waters of Ganga, and those who follow revelation (*shruti*) bathe in both (11.6.15–19). Krishna finally agreed to their request. He would return to Vaikuntha and would visit Brahma's Satyaloka on the way.

After Brahma, Shiva, and the others left Dvaraka, evil omens appeared. Krishna urged the Yadava elders to take their people immediately to the tirtha at Prabhasa, where Moon had bathed to be freed of the pulmonary tuberculosis (phthisis) wasting him due to a curse by the lord of progeny Daksha. At Prabhasa, Krishna told them, they may cross the ocean of impending disaster by baths, by libations to the ancestors and devas, by feeding Brahmins, and by gifts to worthy men (*BP* 11.6.34–38).

Uddhava had seen and heard everything and anxiously approached Krishna for an explanation. As Krishna's devotee from the age of five, Uddhava had long served as chief Vrishni commander and was his close friend (*BP* 3.2; 3.3.1–6) and an ideal Bhagavata (*BP* 11.16.29). When Uddhava realized that Krishna was going to "die" he asked to be taken home (*dhama*) with him, but quickly added that of course devotees like himself easily cross the darkness of samsara simply by serving him (*BP* 11.6.43). Uddhava described those devotees and, in doing so, reduced Brahma and Shiva's six types to two, servants and renouncers (see Appendix 1).

In response to Uddhava's anxiety about his imminent departure, Krishna urged him to renounce his householder life. Seven days from now, he said, the

sea will submerge Dvaraka, and once he, Krishna, leaves Bharata the Kali Yuga will follow. He urged Uddhava not to stay for that unrighteous time, but to renounce his people and family, to follow him, to wander, and learn to see him in everything. Krishna then told Uddhava what such renunciation would be like (*BP* 11.7.6–12). He would learn to know that the world perceived by the senses is like the magic (*maya*) in a magic show. Controlling the senses and the mind, he would see the moving universe (*jagat*) in the atman and the atman in Krishna. When omniscient knowledge (*jnana*) and discriminatory knowledge (*vijnana*) fuse in the atman, Uddhava would experience the atman and nothing would then be an obstacle. He would live like an unfettered infant; without any sense of "ought" he would spontaneously avoid the harmful (*dosha*) and promote the favorable (*guna*), because he would see the world as the Bhagavan.

Uddhava, however, thought radical renunciation (*sannyasa*) would be difficult for him (*BP* 11.7.14–16). He acknowledged that Krishna is the Ruler of such self-control (*yogesha*), but described himself as immersed in the feeling that he *is* his body, and in the feeling that all those people connected to his body do in fact belong to *him*. Maya confounds all embodied beings from Brahma down, and everyone thinks that what is external to them is the only real thing. Uddhava nevertheless believed Krishna could help him overcome his delusion and formally took refuge in him: "Narayana the friend of Nara, the pure, endless, transcendent, omniscient Ruler, the eternal abode without delusion, I take refuge in you" (*BP* 11.7.18). Uddhava thus invoked the *Bhagavad-gita*, where Krishna cryptically identified himself as a form of Narayana and Arjuna as a form of Nara (*BG* 4.5). In response, Krishna taught Uddhava "The Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" (*Brahmavadasya-samgraha*) (*BP* 11.7–29). It was, in part, a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gita* and concluded with an explanation of that text's "most important shloka" (*uttamashloka*), 18:66, which Krishna called "the eternal supreme secret of *brahman*" (*BP* 11.29.23 and 25).

When Krishna finished teaching Uddhava, he told him to go to the ashram at Badari where the seer Narayana teaches the seer Nara, and to live there as a renouncer according to the "*Brahman* Doctrine" (*Brahmavada*) as it applied to him (*BP* 3.4.22). With sobbing emotion, Uddhava placed Krishna's sandals on his head, prostrated before him repeatedly, and left the way a worshiper leaves the Bhagavan's icon in the temple's vimana, by touching his head to his footstool (*BP* 11.29.46).

But Uddhava never left Krishna. He followed him as he left for Prabhasa and came upon him for the last time on the banks of the (west-flowing) Sarasvati River seated under a pipal (*ashvattha*) tree (*BP* 3.4). The seer Maitreya came there, too, and in Maitreya's presence, Krishna taught Uddhava again. He called that second teaching the *Bhagavatam*, which he had imparted to Brahma during emanation in the Padma Kalpa (*BP* 3.4.13). The *Bhagavatam* reveals the atman's highest state (*BP* 3.4.19). Its liturgical parallel is the

Padma-samhita, which, as we noted, passed from Brahma to Samvarta in Kanva's ashram (*PS* 1.1–24; Smith 1975: 199).

After Krishna's final instruction, Uddhava witnessed his "death." Later, while on his way to the ashram of Narayana and Nara in Badari, he met Vidura near the Yamuna River and told him of Krishna's passing (*BP* 3.1.24–3.4). Vidura wanted to hear the *Bhagavatam*, but Uddhava said that its appropriate teacher was Maitreya, now living at Haridvara on the Ganga River.

THE PANEL. Krishna's large figure is dressed in royal garments and wears a tall crown (Figure 15.3). He stands facing the viewer, but turns slightly toward Uddhava at his right. Krishna has two pairs of arms, as he does in the *Bhagavad-gita* (*BG* 11.46), and frequently in the *Bhagavata Purana* (e.g., *BP* 1.7.52, 9.30, 12.10; and 3.4.7–8). His back left hand holds the conch and his right hand the wheel as a prayogachakra. His front right hand at his chest forms what appears to be the mayamudra: the thumb and the ring finger touch (*PS* 1974: 16, no. 16). His front left hand rests on his left hip. Uddhava stands to Krishna's right, likewise dressed in royal garments, the crown of his short form reaching to Krishna's back right hand. Uddhava gazes up toward Krishna, forming the anjalimudra with his two hands as he listens to him teach the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine."

Two male figures fly above Krishna and Uddhava, apparently to gloss the depictions below. The figure above Uddhava flies toward the center, gesturing praise with his open left hand raised up toward the male flying above Krishna. This figure (not seen in Panel S2, Figue 15.3) is positioned directly above Krishna's head and likewise flies toward the center. But his right hand raised near his face forms the abhayamudra of protection, matching Krishna's prayogachakra below.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents Dvaraka, Krishna's island realm in the western ocean, at the end of the Dvapara Yuga. Events in the Krishna Story now point forward to the imminent Kali Yuga represented by the vimana's western side directly ahead.

This panel also represents the relation of Krishna as refuge to Uddhava as refugee (*prapanna*). This relationship of guru and disciple is a relationship of friends unequal in status. The intimate feelings Krishna has for his friend Uddhava prompts him as guru to teach him as his disciple. This relation will continue in the Kali Yuga as the relation of acharya to sadhaka. Moreover, this panel represents the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" contained in Book Eleven of the *Bhagavata Purana* (*BP* 11.7–29). Krishna teaches it for the sake of Bhagavatas who will live in the Kali Yuga soon to arrive.

The depiction of Krishna teaching Uddhava also alludes ahead to the corner panel of Mohini distributing amrita (Panel S6). Shuka contrasted the amrita of the "Summary" to the amrita churned up and distributed to devas:



FIGURE 15.3. Panel S2: Krishna in Dvaraka teaches Uddhava the "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine." AIIS.

The latter gives devas long and happy life, but condemns them to repeated death and birth, while the former is the death of that repeated death and birth. As the essence of jnana and vijnana, the "Summary" slays any anxiety (*bhaya*) about repeatedly coming into existence (*bhava*) (*BP* 11.29.49).

The story introduced by this panel ends with Maitreya teaching the *Bhagavatam* to Vidura, which constitutes Books Three and Four of the *Bhagavata Purana*. Maitreya first reviewed Krishna's life for Vidura and then taught him about Brahma's birth from the lotus (*padma*) at the beginning of the Padma Kalpa. Vidura the listener thus links the end of Krishna's life, the onset of the Kali Yuga, and the emperor Parikshit's rule narrated in Books Eleven, Twelve, One, and Two to Brahma's lifetime unfolding in Books Three and Four. Maitreya telling the *Bhagavatam* to Vidhura appears to follow the *Padma-samhita* in general outline; *Bhagavata Purana* 3–4 is thus a narrative and metaphysical complement to the *Padma-samhita*'s liturgical concerns.

Vidura as the audience linking the end of Krishna's life to the beginning of Brahma's corresponds to his identity as the incarnation of Yama. That righteous deva of the dead rules in the south toward which this panel faces, and serves Bhagavatas (*BP* 3.5.20–22; 3.7.19–20).[16] Except for them, those who live in the Kali Yuga are so obscured by ignorance and desire that they are almost inevitably condemned to Yama's purgatorial realms in the south. But Bhagavatas need not fear him, and the way to be a Bhagavata is the content of "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" and the *Bhagavatam* represented by this panel. Death thus appears in a highly auspicious context: Krishna's teachings to Uddhava are for the sadhaka the "death of Death." They are the Unobstructed formation's brilliant conquering power (*tejas*).

Finally, the mayamudra Krishna forms in the panel with his right hand—if this is a correct interpretation—refers to the final goal of one who seeks to see truly. As he tells Uddhava, such a person will know that the world perceived by the senses is a trick of misperception like the maya of a magician's performance.

Panel S3: The Avadhuta Dattatreya Teaches King Yadu

THE STORY. This story is Krishna's first lesson in his "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine." Krishna told Uddhava about Dattatreya to illustrate that the intellect alone can lead one to knowledge of the atman (*BP* 11.7–9, esp. 11.7.19–23). Dattatreya, a radical Brahmin renouncer (*avadhuta*), taught King Yadu that one does not need revelation or commitment to a single guru to attain enlightened consciousness; intelligent use of keen observation and reflection will produce it. That teaching resembles the Buddhist bhikshu's sadhana of disciplined reflection to perceive the opposite: the absence of atman (*anatman*).

King Yadu met Dattatreya wandering in the forest like a boy without a care. Yadu's description of him (as translated by Tapasyananda) matches both the portrayal in the panel and that of the sant: "You are strong, learned, capable,

handsome and eloquent. But you show no desire for anything, nor do you care to do any work. You merely wander about sometimes like a senseless man, sometimes as one inebriated, and sometimes like one possessed. While all men are being burnt in the fire of sexual craving and greed, you remain unaffected by it like an elephant that has plunged into the waters of the Ganga. O holy one! Kindly tell me what it is that fills your heart always with joy, though you are without any object of sense enjoyment and are companionless and alone" (*BP* 11.7.28–30; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 4: 39).

In the forest, Dattatreya told Yadu stories of his twenty-four gurus; each had taught him a specific lesson that led him to transcendent joy (*BP* 11.9.4). His gurus were the five material elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and space. They were the moon and the sun. They were doves, a python, the ocean, a river, a moth, a honeybee, an elephant, a man who gathered honey, a deer, and a fish. They were Pingala the courtesan, an osprey, a girl with bangles, an arrowsmith, a snake, a spider, and, finally, a wasp. Each guru caused him to use his own observation and reflection to attain a joy experienced by an innocent and ignorant child and by one who transcends the gunas. In a style resembling the Buddhist *Jatakas*, Dattatreya taught Yadu through folk tales, parables, and metaphors based on practical wisdom.

On first glance the panel appears to portray a bodhisattva as an avatar of the Bhagavan.[17] Likewise, one may think it portrays Parshvanatha, the twenty-third Jaina tirthanhkara, because the enclosing nature of the curving form above his head suggests the snake hoods characteristic of Parshvanatha.[18] Nevertheless, he is Dattatreya portrayed "in the manner of twilight" as avadhuta, muni, paramahamsa, bhikshu, or sannyasin. Krishna described avadhutas as bhikshus who usually wore something when among householders.[19] One exception was Vyasa's son Shuka, who taught the *Bhagavata Purana*; as an avadhuta he was completely naked in the presence of women at least once, but his nakedness was essential to that episode (*BP* 1.4.4–8).[20] The renouncer's nudity signifies consciousness beyond the dualities of gender, but his loincloth signifies respect for the feelings of householders. Krishna said the avadhuta carries a bamboo rod (*danda*), a walking stick that symbolizes control over mind, speech, and body. The "triple danda" is a single bamboo rod used to symbolize the three disciplines, or three rods bound together (*BP* 11.18.17; 11.18.40; 11.23.34).

King Yadu's comment that Dattatreya is perpetually "cool" and not burning with the fire of sexual craving and greed like others alludes to a tradition about him not found in the *Bhagavata Purana*. According to Hariprasad Shivprasad Joshi, other accounts of the avadhuta Dattatreya describe him as attached to wine and women yet not defiled by them; he represents Agama rites of the "left-hand" (*vamachara*), which use wine and sexual intercourse as means to transcend normal consciousness. The woman, Joshi suggested, is the symbol of atman experience, and wine the pleasure arising out of it (Joshi 1965: 66–71).

In the *Markandeya Purana* (17.15–16; 23–25), Dattatreya enjoyed the objects of sense even while engaged in deep meditation, and sages were not put off by his wine and women. Dattatreya exemplifies a nonclinging stance toward the objects of senses while involved with them. With that stance, the sant moves freely among the polarities of purity and pollution, whether in the sensually aesthetic life of wealthy sophisticates or in the polluting life of corpse burners, all the while pure like Matarishvan, the household fire.

Visual "language in the manner of twilight" appears in the panel as as Dattatreya's shaved head; no other figure on the temple has a shaved head. It suggests a bodhisattva bhikshu who will become a buddha. In Bhagavata belief, the Shakyamuni Buddha appeared early in the Kali Yuga as an avatar of Vishnu to delude asuras or "imposters" (*pakhanda*) with an attractive form and heretical doctrines (*BP* 1.3.24; 2.7.37).[21] Positioned here, the panel alludes to the deceiving Buddha who will appear in the Kali Yuga to the west, where a Buddhist temple may once have stood in Kanchipuram's center.

Allusions to Taravaloka and Vessantara. The panel's visual focus on the avadhuta's outstretched right hand evokes two figures in the Shibi lineage familiar to the temple's eighth-century audience: Taravaloka of the "Great Romance" and Vessantara of the *Jatakas*. Their stories are almost exact parallels. According to karma doctrine, a person who attains enlightened consciousness through his or her own efforts, without a sadhana directed by a guru and without revealed teachings, does so because of significantly virtuous acts in previous lives. The most significant is giving (*dana*), as illustrated repeatedly in the stories of the first corner panel facing south. Taravaloka in the "Great Romance" was a paradigm for dana, which led to his imperial rule of the vidyadharas. He eventually renounced that rule in favor of tapas in the forest. Similarly, in the nearly identical Buddhist story of Vessantara, his dana gave him the Heaven of the Delighted (Tushita) and led him to tapas in the forest as the Shakyamuni (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: xv–xvi). Moreover, the *tara* they share in their names links them to the female named Tara: In Bhagavata lore she is the wife of Moon and mother of Budha; in Buddhist lore she is the consort of Avalokiteshvara and "mother" to the Shakyamuni as a buddha.

The story of the Shakyamuni's "birth" as a buddha continues the story of Vessantara's perfection in giving. When Vessantara died, he entered the Heaven of the Delighted (Tushita) from which he descended as the Shakya prince of the Gautama lineage. He later became a muni, and after six years of extreme tapas, sat under an asvattha tree facing east, resolved to transcend the cosmic asvattha tree of samsara. As twilight approached, Death and Desire in the single form of Mara attacked him. Being completely on his own, his only defense was the ripened fruit of perfect acts from previous lives, the greatest of which was his dana as Vessantara. The muni therefore reached down toward Goddess Earth with his right hand and asked her to bear witness to the

perfection of his previous giving. Goddess Earth roared in affirmation. As he concentrated on his dana as Vessantara, a huge elephant named Mountain-girdle knelt before him to acknowledge that he had given "the great gift, the supreme gift." With that, Death-and-Desire fled. The muni then began the series of four visualizations (*dhyana*) that led at sunrise to his enlightenment as a buddha (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: xvii–xix; Robinson and Johnson 1982: 5–13).

The Vessantara story, we are told, was and continues to be the most famous story in the Buddhist world (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: xv; Spiro 1970: 108). Beginning at Barhut in perhaps the second century BCE, it was depicted in most Buddhist sites from Central Asia to Sri Lanka, and no doubt also at Kanchipuram on structures no longer standing. Its oldest and longest literary version dates from before the third to fourth centuries CE, and resembles a folk epic with similarities to the *Mahabharata* (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: xxvii–xliv). It forms part of the *Jataka* book and the longest chapter of the *Chariya-pitaka*, both in the Pali Canon. Its Pali tellings led to tellings in Sanskrit, Chinese, and languages of Southeast Asia.

The Pali version, however, may have developed from pre-Buddhist tales about the self-giving Shibi dynasty, which non-Buddhist traditions continued. Taravaloka in the "Great Romance" represents such a non-Buddhist telling; and its related stories of Moon, Tara, and Budha suggest that the pre-Buddhist original was astral (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: xxiii–xxxi).

A significant detail in the Vessantara story, however, links it more firmly to this panel's location next to the window through which the Unobstructed formation gazes southward. If the vimana's mandala were the mandala of a city, that south-facing window would correspond to its southern gateway. The avadhuta in this panel would then stand at that southern gateway reaching out in a gesture of giving. That gesture alludes to Vessantara who, like Taravaloka, visited the city's almshouses each day. They stood at the city's four gates, at its center, and at the gate of his mother's palace. A king whose land suffered from drought sent eight Brahmins to the city to ask Prince Vessantara to give them his white elephant, for it would bring them rain. Early in the morning, the Brahmins waited at the almshouse at the southern gate and watched Vessantara give alms at the east gate. When he reached them at the southern gate riding on his white elephant, they stretched out their hands and asked him to give them the elephant. Prince Vessantara would have preferred to give them something of his own self, such as his head, but descended the elephant and gave it and everything connected to it: a gift of seven priceless things plus five hundred families of attendants. The Brahmins walked the elephant through the southern gate to the center of the city and exited through the northern gate (*Vessantara Jataka* 1977: 12–14). Vessantara's dana at the southern gate was the basis of his subsequent career of perfect giving, as Goddess Earth testified, which led to the Shakyamuni's "awakening." The depiction of the avadhuta "who gave" (*datta*) as Vessantara did, his right hand stretched out in a panel

placed analogously at "the southern gate," would allude in the mind of the eighth-century viewer directly to that crucial ritual act in the most popular of Buddhist stories.

Many Buddhists in eighth-century Kanchipuram, whom Hsuan Tsang had noted a century earlier, probably worshiped Tara and followed sadhanas of Esoteric Buddhism known as the Vajrayana and as the Mantrayana (Nakamura 1987: 313–343).[22] The formal similarities between the Vajrayana and the Pancharatra Agama are notable. According to L. M. Joshi, the Vajrayana (Diamond Vehicle) originated in the Swat Valley (Uddiyana) in the north and in Dravidian-speaking regions of the south (Dhanyakataka, Sriparvata, and Potalaka Parvata).[23] The bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara was believed to dwell with Tara on Potalaka Parvata, which Shu Hikosaka identified as the mountain Potiyil at the southern tip of Tamilnadu (Hikosaka 1989: 177–202). The Mantrayana was first taught at Dhanayakataka, according to Taranatha (Taranatha 1970: 345).

Esoteric Buddhist literature began appearing in the fourth century and was characterized by the use of Vedic rites such as the homa, the role of Indra's vajra in Vajrapani, the presence of Shaiva and Vaishnava deities, the celebration of the Shakyamuni Buddha as conqueror of demons, and the stress on mantras, especially on the recitation of protective spells (*dharani*) for the sake of worldly well-being. One such system was known as the Taramantra (Taranatha 1970: 346). By the latter half of the seventh century, Esoteric Buddhists had employed Prajnaparamita thought in two texts perhaps composed at Nalanda, the *Mahavairochana-sutra* and the *Sarvatathagata-tattva-samgraha* (Diamond Peak Sutra). By 800 the *Guhyasamaja-tantra* had been added (Nakamura 1987: 321, 333, note 16). Texts about Tara appeared from the eighth century, as did the earliest epigraphical record of her worship, found in Java (Beyer 1978: 3–11; Nakamura 1987: 334–335). The *Kalachakra-tantra*, composed in the eleventh century, represented Esoteric Buddhism's final stage and revealed an affinity to Vaishnavism. Its authors expected that an alliance of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas, and Shaivas would defeat the newly arrived Muslims, and were especially conciliatory toward the Vaishnavas (Nakamura 1987: 339).

In sum, by 800, Buddhists in Kanchipuram following the Vajrayana or Mantrayana, and Bhagavatas following the Pancharatra Agama or Mantrasiddhanta Marga shared these elements: the notion of Shakti; the idea of the threefold or fourfold cosmic body; the idea of the cosmic body as active and taking on forms; the idea of the elements of the universe as the cosmic body of the Effulgent One (the Vishakhayupa or Mahavairochana); a central focus on the use of mantras and dharani accompanied by mudras to attain worldly goals (*prayoga*); the use of four classes of Agama or Tantra (*kriya*, *charya*, *yoga*, and *anuttara-yoga* or *jnana*); mandalas used as objects of meditation; unction by sprinkling or pouring water (*abhisheka*); the fire sacrifice (*homa*); the goals of attaining success (*siddha*) and mysterious power (*siddhi*); and the purification

and use of sexual desire for attaining pure consciousness (Nakamura 1987: 314–339; Gupta 1989).

As noted, the panel depicting Dattatreya flanked by Soma and Durvasas puns on "Budha" and "Buddha," and on "Tara" and "Avaloka." The puns would have been evident both to Bhagavatas and to Esoteric Buddhists because of what they shared, especially a similar concept of Shakti: Tara for Esoteric Buddhists resembles Sri Lakshmi for Bhagavatas.[24] Dattatreya teaching Yadu also puns on "datta" as "I have given" to denote the bodhisattva Vessantara, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Taravaloka, and Dattatreya; and it connects all those allusions to Krishna, because the panel illustrates the beginning of his "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine." "Twilight" punning brings all modes of dana back to Krishna.

A contemporaneous literary example of that type of multilayered visual pun appears in a Sanskrit romance of about the mid-seventh century noted for its puns. Appropriately, it is about twilight (*samdhya*). In his *Vasavadatta*, Subandhu played on words to describe twilight: "The Lady Twilight was seen, devoted to the stars and clad in red sky, as a Buddhist nun [is devoted to Tara and is clad in red garments]."[25] As Stephan Beyer explained, the pun centers on the ambivalence of *tara* (which means "star" and "Tara") and of *ambara* (which means "sky" or "garment"). Beyer, while noting problems in his interpretation, described a situation that fits eighth-century Kanchipuram: "If we do accept that Subandhu was making a pun on the name of a Buddhist goddess before what was a primarily Hindu audience in his courtly circle—and playing with the name as casually as he played with those of the Brahmanic legends—it seems reasonable to suppose that this goddess was fairly well known by his time, else the pun would be without effect. And even if we concede that he might have been showing off an esoteric knowledge of Buddhism, at least he himself was acquainted with some sort of cult of Tara, a goddess whose popular devotion extended beyond the bounds of minor legend."[26] If we replace Subandhu with the designers of the Emperor's Vishnu-house, we have an accurate statement of what they achieved in these first three south-facing panels: By playing on the names Tara and Datta they evoked Krishna for Bhagavata literati.

THE PANEL. The wandering Dattatreya has two arms and stands at the eastern side of the panel as he looks down at Yadu (Panel 15.4). He is nude except for a loincloth (*kaupina*) pulled between his legs. His visible left earlobe is lengthened, and his hair is shaved or closely cropped. A halo-like structure surrounds his head, perhaps a nimbus or part of a damaged form above him. His left hand, at the level of his chest, holds a long staff stretching diagonally from his right thigh over his left shoulder. He stretches his right arm downward toward Yadu, and forms a badly damaged mudra with his hand; this mudra, the visual center of the panel, is most likely the danamudra of giving. All an avadhuta has



FIGURE 15.4. Panel S3: The Avadhuta Dattatreya teaches King Yadu (prior to repair). IFDI.

to give is his teaching. But it may also identify this teacher as Datta, "He Who Is Given."

To Dattatreya's left stands the smaller damaged figure of King Yadu with two arms. He is dressed in royal garb and his crown reaches to the level of Dattatreya's chin. The king bends his left knee slightly toward the avadhuta, holds his right hand at the level of his stomach, and gazes upward toward him as he gestures praise with his open left hand.

At the top of the panel two male figures form a triangle with the vertical axis as its tip; they appear to gloss Dattareya's reception of Yadu's praise and King Yadu's reception of Dattatreya's teaching. The crowned male rising from behind the curving form above Dattatreya's head faces forward, bends from the waist slightly westward, and gestures with his open right hand in an echo of Yadu's left hand. The figure rising behind Yadu faces forward, tilts his crowned head eastward so that its top touches the other male's right elbow, and with his right hand at his chest forms what may be the tattvamudra or jnanamudra, in which the thumb and forefinger touch.

The Panel's Meanings. The avadhuta Dattatreya represents the perfected yogin, whose walking staff, Krishna tells Uddhava, symbolizes control over mind, speech, and body. Dattatreya's stately and tranquil nude body illustrates illustrates his perpetually cool state while in the midst of burning sensual desire. Moreover, by illustrating the avadhuta this panel signifies the differing types of Bhagavatas introduced by Brahma and Shiva, and by Uddhava in the *Bhagavata Purana* (as mentioned in the previous Panel S2), and by Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita* 12.1–12. In each case the renouncer of the householder life, who seeks the nondual and unmanifest *brahman*, is set apart from those who seek *brahman* manifest as Vasudeva Krishna. The avadhuta Dattatreya in this panel represents the first type, those who gather around the imperishable, indefinite Unmanifest, which is present everywhere.

Even though in Bhagavata thought shramanas in Kanchipuram were deceived asuras or "imposters," that judgment was not as derogatory as it may appear. The next panel portrays Prahlada worshiping Man-lion; Prahlada is the paradigm of the asura as devotee. He represents all people unclean by virtue of birth, ignorance, or sin, who nevertheless receive purification through diksha. To categorize shramanas as asuras, therefore, places them among the majority of the people of the Pallava domain; they all needed to be "cleaned up" through diksha.

Panel S4: Prahlada Worships Man-lion in the Region of Hari

The west half of the vimana's south-facing side focuses on prayoga rites in its three panels. Just as the three panels of the east half denote the *Padma-samhita* Brahma learned, so these three panels denote the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* Shiva

learned. A discussion of prayoga near the end of the *Padma-samhita* introduces Vighnaraja (King of Obstacles), usually depicted as the elephant-headed son of Parvati and Shiva known as Vighnesha (Ruler of Obstacles), Ganesha (Ruler of Hosts), and Ganapati (Master of Hosts). Vighnaraja does not appear on the vimana, but if he did he would be in this western half of the south-facing wall, as he is in the early sixth-century Bhagavata temple at Deogarh (Hudson 1991). That same chapter in the *Padma-samhita*, however, gives considerable attention to mantras addressed to various forms of Sudarshana's representation as a wheel; and the next and penultimate chapter is entirely devoted to prayoga application of the *Sudarshana-mantra* (*PS* 31–32; Smith 1975: 241). Sudarshana, it appears, is the "King of Obstacles" (Vighnaraja).

Sudarshana. Our fullest understanding of Sudarshana comes from the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* (Smith 1975: 43–65). Durvasas overheard Shiva teach Narada about Sudarshana (Beautiful or Handsome) in the form of the Bhagavan's wheel (*chakra*). Narada had asked Shiva about the nature of Sudarshana's power, thinking especially of the way he had defeated other weapons in Vishnu's battle with Kalanemi (represented on the middle floor above by Panel 20). Shiva explained to Narada what he had learned from Samkarshana, and Durvasas listened. Durvasas then repeated Shiva's account to Bharadvaja on the banks of the heavenly Ganga River. A condensed form of Durvasas's account is the *Ahirbudhyna-samhita*. Besides explaining these final three south-facing panels, it refers to the *Satvata-samhita* in the context of "pure creation" (*AS* 5; Smith 1975: 146) and to the *Jayakhya-samhita* during the discussion of mantras (*AS* 14.41–66; Smith 1975: 152).

According to Durvasas, Sudarshana embodies Shakti's will (*iccha*) to emanate and the efficient cause (*kriya*) of the universe. Shakti is also its material cause (*bhuti*). Shakti as Goddess Sri Lakshmi is kriya-shakti, which the Sudarshana wheel in the Bhagavan's back right hand signifies. Shakti as Goddess Bhumi (Earth) is bhuti-shakti, and though it is not stated explicitly, the conch held in the Bhagavan's back left hand signifies her, because it and Goddess Earth were lifted out of the water, and because the conch touches the Bhagavan's lips, as does a female lover.[27] In esoteric rites discussed at the Mohini panel above (Panel S6), the conch also becomes the residence of "Kalika of the South" (Dakshinakalika).

As kriya-shakti, Sudarshana causes the emanation and devolution of space-time, and as its "support" (*adhara*) sustains everything (*AS* 7.62–73; 8–10; Smith 1975: 47–48). Its supporting function (*adhara*) appears as different forms of the wheel, but also in mandala visualizations as Tortoise (Kurma) and the Snake Shesha or Ananta (*PS* 22.1–36; Smith 1975: 283–284). Tortoise as "Unbounded" (Akupara) faces west around the corner from Mohini (Panel W1).

One mode of support is teaching about Shakti at work in the world, and such a teaching existed in the Krita Yuga. As the Krita Yuga shifted to the other

ages, however, Sudarshana dispersed that original teaching into five systems (*shastra*) through five sages. Apantaratamas taught the three Vedas, Kapila taught samkhya, Hiranyagarbha (Brahma) taught yoga, Shiva taught the Pashupata, and the Bhagavan as Sudarshana condensed the pure essence of the original and taught it as the Pancharatra or Satvata system (*AS* 11–13; Smith 1975: 48–50). Sudarshana also promulgated systems intended to delude the wicked through the Buddha, the Jina, and some Shaiva teachers, as illustrated by Panel SP1 and on the middle floor above by Panel 17 (*AS* 12.51–55; 33.1–23; Smith 1975: 49, 56).[28]

As Shiva had said, the wheel in various forms embodies Sudarshana, who acts through mantras and yantras. When skilled Brahmins apply mantras in concert with a skilled king's use of weapons, the kingdom prospers (*AS* 16; Smith 1975: 51). Mantras infused into the body of the sadhaka protect in two ways: through "a kind of awesome and glowing radiance" (*tejas*) within the sadhaka's own being, and through "verbal and spellbinding power" (*shakti*) employed through eight types of wheel-shaped yantras (*AS* 21–23; Smith 1975: 52–53).

According to Durvasas, the most powerful mode of protection in the Kali Yuga is the Sudarshana yantra combined with the Narasimha yantra, a pair signified by the adjacent Man-lion and Boar panels facing south (Panels S4 and S5). The sadhanas of those combined yantras can bring about almost anything, and kings find them especially useful (*AS* 25, 27; Smith 1975: 53–54). To conquer a country, for example, the king should place the Sudarshana icon facing the intended country as he conducts appropriate rites. The weapons and army the king will then use against that country become extensions of various parts of Sudarshana's body to protect the kingdom and its subjects (*AS* 29–30; Smith 1975: 54–55).

At the same time, the king is a refugee (*prapanna*) and at all times should worship the sixteen-armed Sudarshana according to the discipline of nyasa or "abandoning" dharmas, as Krishna urged Arjuna to do in *Bhagavad-gita* 18.66. That act of refuge (*prapatti*) has six qualities (in H. Daniel Smith's summary): "an intense hope that *prapatti* will be successful, an abandonment of undesirable practices, a deep conviction that God will indeed save one, a sincere petition to Him as Protector, a surrender of oneself, and an admission of one's helplessness. Who does this '*nyasa*' completely and successfully need not do the other things like going on pilgrimages, undertaking *vratas*, presenting *dana*-gifts, etc." (*AS* 37; Smith 1975: 57). Still, the king may worship Sudarshana for personal health: He eradicates illnesses such as fevers, tuberculosis, skin diseases, gastrointestinal troubles, and epilepsy, because they are fruits of sin and Sudarsana worship removes the sins (*AS* 38; Smith 1975: 57). But one rite will bring a king the fruits of all rites, Durvasas reported, a "most secret of secrets," the "Great Unction" (*mahabhiseka*). The king performs it with the Sudarshana yantra placed on a Mahendra yantra together with a pot of holy

water; eventually the water is poured over his head and the heads of his ministers (*AS* 39; Smith 1975: 58).

According to Durvasas, Shiva said that Sudarshana conquers through at least 102 weapons (*astra*) connected with mantras, as manifested in the slaughter of Madhu and Kaitabha, which is illustrated directly above this panel on the middle floor (Panel 19). Vishnu appeared in the form of the Sudarshana wheel, decapitated the asura pair, and restored Veda to Brahma (*AS* 40–41; Smith 1975: 58). Subsidiary mantras (*angamantra*) use subsidiary weapons (*angastra*); to illustrate them, Shiva told the story of the king of Kashi who hurled an "effigy" at Krishna. Along with the "effigy," Sudarshana destroyed the king with his own angastra.

An expanded telling of that story in the *Bhagavata Purana* illustrates the way a Bhagavata king may defend himself against enemy kings, both Bhagavata and Shaiva (*BP* 10.66). In the story, Paundraka the king of Karusha claimed to be the real Vasudeva; he represents enemy kings who are also Bhagavatas. While staying with Kashi's king, Paundraka sent a messenger to Dvaraka to challenge Krishna either to take refuge in him or to fight. Krishna belittled the message, mounted his chariot, and went to Kashi. Paundraka, dressed just like the Bhagavan, went with the king of Kashi and many warriors to attack Krishna outside the city. But Krishna slaughtered the warriors and filled the battlefield with dismembered bodies until it looked like a playground for Rudra, Master of Ghosts (*bhutapati*). He then cut off Paundraka's head with the wheel and the head of the Kashi king with arrows, hurled the latter into the city, and returned to Dvaraka. But Paundraka had visualized the Bhagavan each day and wore his emblems, therefore his death by the Sudarshana wheel freed him of bondage and he attained the Bhagavan's own form (*svarupa*).

Meanwhile, in Kashi the beheaded king's son, Sudakshina (Excellent Right Hand or Virtuous South) vowed revenge. Shiva gave him a boon, and he chose learning the means to slay his father's slayer. Shiva said to him (in Tapasyananda's translation): "With the help of Brahmana priests, and adopting the Abhichara rites of worship (black magic) propitiate Dakshinagni [southern fire], who will carry out your objects, as a sacrificial priest does those of the master of a sacrifice. If the ritual is done against anyone other than holy men, your object will be carried out by the Agni along with the Bhutas accompanying him" (*BP* 10.66.30–31; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 3: 328).

Sudakshina performed the malevolent abhichara rites and out of the southern fire arose Agni in a fierce form: "The hairs on his head and face were like red-hot copper; his eyes emitted sparks of fire; his face with the ends of the fangs protruding and brows fiercely arching, presented a gruesome appearance. With his tongue he licked his lips. Stark naked and armed with a three-pronged trident, he walked about with his palmyrah-like legs, causing tremors on the earth. He ran towards Dwaraka, scorching the environs wherever he went" (*BP* 10.66.32–34; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 3: 328–329). Dvaraka's

residents saw that embodiment of the abhichara fire rushing toward them and appealed to Krishna for protection. He sent Sudarshana in pursuit. Retreating in shame, the abhichara fire returned to Kashi and burned up Sudakshina and his priests. Sudarshana then entered Kashi, burned it down, and returned to Dvaraka and to Krishna, for whom all exploits are easy.

The story tells us that a king's enemy may be a Bhagavata, but that does not mean he should not be slain; but just because he is "false" does not mean than once slain he will not attain the Bhagavan. Daily visualization of the Bhagavan purifies him of the sins resulting from his "falseness." Moreover, even though Shiva is the master of abhichara rites, that does not mean he is not the Bhagavan's devotee, nor does it mean that abhichara rites do not have their place. They may be used against people who are not "holy" (*abrahmanye*); but if used against the "holy" they will backfire to destroy their patron and his priests.

Shiva now told Narada about the time the Bhagavan revealed Sudarshana to him so that he could destroy legions of demons threatening the world. Shiva was so strengthened by Sudarshana that other devas went to him for help. He taught Brihaspati, the devas' acharya, the mantra to summon Sudarshana in his cosmic two-armed form, but it was so overwhelming that Brihaspati fainted (*AS* 42–43; Smith 1975: 59). Shiva also told Narada about King Kushadhvaja. He was freed of the demon "Great Delusion" (*mahamoha*) and of all his karma by building Sudarshana a temple and worshiping him for ten days. Removal of karma was the precondition for Kushadhvaja attaining "the sublime wisdom that comes of union with the Divine Soul" (*AS* 45; Smith 1975: 60). But a king may find it difficult to spend so much time in rites addressed to Sudarshana or to perform rites for which he is not qualified, such as the homa. If so, his court priest (*purohita*) may perform them on his behalf (*AS* 46; Smith 1975: 60).

Many Sudarshana rites require much time and effort. Shiva told Narada about the "Great Pacification" (*mahashantividhana*). Eight emperors performed it to set at rest all the "threatening and malefic powers in this world and the next," and to gain prestige and power for themselves (*AS* 47: Smith 1975: 60–61). But there are less time-consuming ways for a king to gain Sudarshana's power on his behalf. For example, the Sudarshana yantra may be inscribed on a seat, ring, mirror, flag or canopy, and Sudarshana will use that yantra to defend and conquer with his astras (*AS* 48–50; Smith 1975: 61–62).

Shiva concluded by teaching Narada about the esoteric structure of mantras. Mantras, like humans, have gross (*sthula*), subtle (*sukshma*), and transcendent (*para*) dimensions. Moreover, each letter of the pranava (A-U-M), which begins each mantra, is presided over by Samkarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, respectively; they give that sound its efficacy. The word *namah* (veneration), which ends each mantra, establishes a relationship between the mantra's user and the deva addressed by it (*AS* 51–52; Smith 1975: 62). Shiva went on to discuss various mantras, but gave special attention to the Tara

mantra and to the details of the "Narasimha mantra in the anushtubh meter." He concluded, finally, by explaining the Purushasukta mantra, the Shrisukta mantra, and the Varaha mantra. The Varaha mantra in its gross or subtle forms reflects the brilliance and power of Sudarshana and summarizes all that he said about mantra (*AS* 59; Smith 1975: 64). Because of Shiva's teaching to Narada as reported by Durvasas, we now understand that the panel depicting Man-lion (the Narasimha mantra) finds its completion in the panel depicting Boar (the Varaha mantra).

THE STORY. As discussed in Panels 8 and 9 of the sanctum above, after Narasimha rips apart Hiranyakashipu he ascends Indra's throne, which the asura had seized, and the asura's son Prahlada worships him. This takes place in the first Manu Term of this Daytime of Boar. Narasimha makes Prahlada the king of asuras for this single Manu Term. During his rule he practices the life of the refugee, listens to the stories of the Bhagavan, keeps Him in mind, and dedicates all his actions to Him. In order to eradicate karmic fruits, he experiences those already destined for this life, and avoids generating negative ones by performing only good acts. He lets Time consume the fruits that have determined his body's nature and span of life (*BP* 7.10.11–14). Once Prahlada completes his rule, it appears, he goes to the Hari region of Jambu to worship Narasimha, for this is where he is during this seventh Manu Term.

The region of Jambu called Hari (Harivarsha) lies immediately south of central Ilavrita (*BP* 5.18.7–14). The Bhagavan appears here as a tawny lion (*hari*) in the shape of a man (*naraharirupa*). The great asura Prahlada worships him together with the region's other inhabitants, and offers him a prayer beginning with the twelve-syllable Narasimha mantra, *Om namo bhagavate narasimhaya*. His prayer summarizes the ideal of Krishna's servant or slave. Prahlada prays to Narasimha for "nonclinging" (*asanga*) and uses a mantra ending in the "seed" (*bija*) *AUM kshraum* (*BP* 5.18.8). He asks that the Bhagavan as Man-lion, the brilliant and self-sufficient conquering power within tejas, appear with diamond claws and diamond fangs to burn up karma and ignorance. He then prays for the happiness and peace of people, and for the spontaneous flow of their minds toward the Bhagavan: "May all be free from desire, from all karma and delusion, and from all attachments to house, wife, sons, wealth, and relatives. If any attachment is to continue, let it be to the devotees of the Bhagavan who listen to his exploits with a devotion not motivated by personal gain. Clinging to sants (*satsang*) leads one to hear about the Bhagavan, who then enters consciousness and purifies it. The household is the root of birth and death and Man-lion's feet are the refuge from it" (*BP* 5.18.7–14). That portrayal of the Hari region points to the Man-lion Consecration, which purifies one for further consecrations, such as to the powerful "Man-lion mantra in the anushtubh meter."

THE CEREMONY OF THE MAN-LION CONSECRATION. Prahlada's asura nature vividly expresses the power of the Man-lion Consecration (*nrisimha-diksha*), which purifies a male or female of any caste from sin and pollution (*asubha*), and qualifies those purified for subsequent dikshas (*SS* 16–17; 19; Smith 1975: 529–530). At its beginning, the acharya constructs a wheel with letters (*varnacakra*) to worship the four formations (*vyuha*) (*SS* 2–5; Smith 1975: 516–518). From that wheel he then constructs a twelve-syllable mantra for the sadhaka to use in private worship (*svarthapuja*) of Narasimha. Then through yoga the acharya "becomes" Man-lion and projects Man-lion into the wheel design for worship; perhaps the "Man-lion mantra in the anushtubh meter" embodies him. After the acharya worships Man-lion in the wheel, he purifies the sadhaka by placing his hands on his head while speaking mantras. The sadhaka is then blindfolded and offers water in hospitality (*arghya*) to the material form of the mantra (*mantramurti*). When the blindfold is removed, the sadhaka "sees" that mantra's material form, which means, presumably, he sees an item into which the acharya had projected the mantra. The acharya completes the ceremony by worshiping Man-lion again.

The sadhaka afterward uses the nrisimha mantra constructed for him in a sadhana that may last as long as twenty-one days, and may extend for another seven with japa and homa so that the sadhaka may get "anything his heart desires" (*SS* 17.453–454; Smith 1975: 527). Once he or she is purified, the sadhaka may choose to receive other dikshas for other sadhanas, but in any case must worship Man-lion daily.

Prahlada's perpetual prayer in the Hari region reveals the Narasimha mantra's ideal use. It may indeed lead the sadhaka toward all worldly benefits, but the ideal sadhaka will use it to destroy the desire for such benefits. The ideal sadhaka will pray that he or she, and all others too, may be freed from attachment to the household and all it represents even while living in their midst. The ideal sadhaka will ask for only one thing: that the Bhagavan will stimulate in him or her, and in all others too, the desire to cling to sants. Prahlada makes the reason explicit: Clinging to sants (*satsanga*) will open the ears to the Krishna story because sants always talk about it. Hearing those stories will purify consciousness; as consciousness is purified, the single-minded desire for the Bhagavan innate to the soul (*jiva*) will gradually flame up; as it flames, single-minded desire feeds on the fuel of all other desires and eliminates them.

PRAHLADA AND THE "MAN-LION MANTRA IN THE ANUSHTUBH METER." Prahlada was the paradigmatic refugee (*prapanna*).[29] He stood among devas and others too terrified to approach the enthroned Bhagavan, including even Goddess Sri Lakshmi. That was at the beginning of the first manvantara of the present

kalpa, six manvantaras before our own, when Boar also appeared (*BP* 7.9.1–10.34).[30] Prahlada's exclusive devotion to the Bhagavan was instrumental in his father's death and now he was heir to the asura throne. He had a special claim to Man-lion's attention, and so after Man-lion had slain Hiranyakashipu (as illustrated on the middle floor above by Panels 8 and 9), devas led by Brahma asked Prahlada to intercede with the frightening Man-lion on their behalf, and pacify him. Prahlada agreed, and his lengthy prayer to Man-lion appears to comment on the "Man-lion mantra in the anushtubh meter" (*nrsimhanushtubh mantra*).[31]

Slowly Prahlada approached the enthroned Man-lion, joined his palms in the anjalimudra, and prostrated full length on the ground in front of his feet. He had placed himself in the category of refugee, and by making himself totally helpless before the warrior king's conquering wrath, his anjalimudra pacified him. Man-lion felt compassion (*kripa*) well up within him from his innate dharma of generous and self-giving disposition toward any sincere refugee, no matter what gender, family, caste, or nature. He acted on that feeling of compassion and reached down, lifted Prahlada up, and placed the palms of his hands on his head. Instantly, Prahlada's pollution (*ashubha*) dissolved and he had the vision (*darshana*) of the unmanifest supreme atman. In ritual terms, Man-lion's touch was the "Vishnu hand" (*vishnuhasta*), the acharya's purifying touch of the sadhaka's head accompanied by mantras.[32]

Prahlada bowed to Man-lion and spoke at length in praise and adoration. He then made his requests, none of which had to do with his own personal worldly gain. He first asked Man-lion to remove his anger so as not to frighten devas. Second, he appealed to Man-lion to teach him "the discipline of serving you," the only means by which he may transcend the destructive power of Time. It is not the protecting Man-lion who frightens him, Prahlada admitted, but the samsara wheel propelled by maya to operate karma. Prahlada's third request, therefore, was that Man-lion as protector draw him away from Man-lion as the samsara wheel. His fourth request was that he be led while alive to the company of the Bhagavan's devotees to serve them. Prahlada paused to reveal his newly granted understanding by explaining the Bhagavan's threefold form, with its subtle and gross bodies encompassed by his highest mode as One. For the sake of the gross body, he said, the Bhagavan overcame rajas and tamas through sattva by entering as his beloved Hayagriva, by destroying Madhu and Kaitabha, and by restoring Veda to Brahma.[33]

Then Prahlada requested emancipation from samsara for himself along with all others helplessly caught in it. Prahlada ended by repeating the helpless condition of those caught by the passions, especially by sexual passion, which can be controlled only through grace. Prahlada finished his prayer and stood before Man-lion, who now gave him a boon, any worldly blessing he desired. Prahlada asked that no desires should arise within him, for he only wanted to serve the Bhagavan completely without self-interest, just as the Bhagavan gives

boons without self-interest (*BP* 7.10.2–10).[34] Man-lion nevertheless made Prahlada the leader of asuras for one manvantara, enjoying all its status and power. While in that position, he was to practice the life of the refugee, listen to the stories of the Bhagavan, keep the Bhagavan in mind, and dedicate all his actions to him. In order to eradicate karmic fruits, he was to experience those already destined for this life and avoid generating new negative ones by performing only good acts, letting Time consume those that have determined his body's nature and lifespan (*BP* 7.10.11–14).

Prahlada finally asked that his father, Hiranyakashipu, be purified of his grievous sins. Surprisingly, Man-lion said that because of Prahlada's birth, Hiranyakashipu and twenty-one generations of his ancestors had already been purified. Even so, as the model for all refugees to imitate, Prahlada should now perform the cremation rites as taught in Veda. Prahlada did so. Priests then consecrated him king of asuras. Devas, who saw that Man-lion was pacified, now approached him freely (*BP* 7.10.24–34).

Shiva told Parvati that the Nrisimhanushtubh mantra is so powerful that Brahma used it to create the world, that it is the basis of human and deva powers, and that unlike other mantras it may be used freely at any time without the usual ritual restrictions (*Ishvara-samhita* 1.19–27; Smith 1975: 88). Even Markandeya overcame death by means of that mantra with thirty-two syllables divided into eleven parts to describe Man-lion's physical and spiritual features (*Ishvara-samhita* 2.1–18; Smith 1975: 88).

The diksha of this mantra is relatively simple compared to others. In the night before consecration, the sadhaka and acharya fast and worship Man-lion. They honor Shakti in a mandala drawn on the ground to which devas are invoked in pots placed at various spots. The sadhaka bathes and he and the acharya sleep. In the morning after bathing, the acharya selects a priest to chant Vedic mantras. Special offerings are then made to Man-lion and into the fire, and the acharya bathes the sadhaka from special vessels. Now dressed in new clothes, the sadhaka sits next to the acharya, who places his right hand on the candidate's chest and whispers, "You shall now become my son." The disciple agrees, repeats mantras, offers the Bhagavan flowers, and the diksha concludes. The acharya clasps his "son's" right hand and teaches him the Nrisimhanushtubh mantra, which he will use in all devotional acts (*Ishvara-samhita* 3; Smith 1975: 88–89).

The mantra's varieties depend on the peaceful or violent uses to which it will be put and on the corresponding mudras and dhyanas. For example, visualization of "a Leonine Form, his tail stretched up, his tongue lapping up all sentient creatures" accompanies the mantra when used to influence and subdue others. Visualization of a Man-lion with five fierce faces accompanies the mantra when used to cure diseases and illnesses from poisons (*Ishvara-samhita* 4; Smith 1975: 89). The mantra also has its lotus-shaped yantra, which, when used with nyasa, protects from all kinds of evils (*Ishvara-samhita* 5; Smith

1975: 89–90). Furthermore, use of the mantra with specific types of fire rites can produce, for example, a son for a barren woman, plentiful grain in the household, paralysis of someone else, the admiration of oneself by others, and relief from fever (*Ishvara-samhita* 7–8; Smith 1975: 90). Special rites addressed to Goddess Lakshmi with Man-lion will elevate one to the status of king (*Ishvara-samhita* 10; Smith 1975: 91). Shiva concluded by describing visualization of the "wheel at the center of consciousness" (*hridaya-chakra*) while sitting in various postures (*asana*) that will yield different results: "For example, if one wants to kill a particular person, one must simply imagine that enemy being beaten by others mercilessly. *Homa*-oblations, accompanied by specific meditations, and done at such times as the dead of the night or in certain seasons, may also effect such sorceries as subduing others or bringing about their death—or even, simply, beating them in debate" (condensation in Smith 1975: 92).

The Sudarshana chakra mandala as described in the exoteric explication of that "king of mantras" summarizes themes introduced by the southeast corner panel (*Nrisimha-purva-tapaniya Upanishad* 5; Deussen 1980: 828–833).[35] The mandala slays evil spirits and protects from death; after the sadhaka has received it from the acharya, he or she should wear it on the neck, arm, or hair-tuft. Its power is equivalent to what the sadhaka would gain if he or she had given earth with its seven continents as the dakshina gift at the end of a sacrifice (*Nrisimha-purva-tapaniya Upanisad* 5.2; Deussen 1980: 831). But while Prahlada's prayer implied that exoteric use of the Sudarshana chakra mandala, his request went beyond it to its esoteric use: It is the means to relate to the atman as taught in the *Nrisimha-uttara-tapaniya Upanishad* (Deussen 1980: 835–858).

The Panel. Narasimha stands in the center of the panel facing the viewer (Figure 15.5). His right hip extends slightly to his right as if his weight is on his right foot in a posture of ease. He has two pairs of arms. His badly damaged back pair presumably holds the conch in the left hand and the wheel as a prayogachakra in the right hand. His front pair of hands forms two mudras at the level of his chest. His left hand forms what appears to be the ahutimudra, which refers to Vedic sacrifice: the thumb touches the tips of the second and third fingers (*PS* 1974: no. 72). His right hand appears to form the tattvamudra or jnanamudra, which refers to teaching: the tips of the thumb and forefinger touch (*PS* 1974: no. 99). This combination may be interpreted to signify the teaching (right hand) of the mantras of Vedic sacrifice (left hand).

At Narasimha's right side, slightly in front, kneels Prahlada. His crown reaches Narasimha's waist. His right knee touches the ground below the level of Narasimha's feet, and his left foot rests flat. He faces southeast, gazes downward, and with his two hands forms the anjalimudra in devout attentiveness. High above Narasimha's crown two figures watch, one behind the



FIGURE 15.5. Panel S4: Prahlada worships Man-lion in the region of Hari. AIIS.

other. The one in front articulates the panels' vertical axis, which runs down through Narasimha's crown, the center of his body, and the space between his feet.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. This panel represents the region of Hari on the Jambu continent, directly south of Mount Meru, and denotes the completion of the story of Narasimha and Hiranyakashipu depicted in Panels 8 and 9 on the

sanctum above. The story ends in Indra's palace at Devadhani on the mountain Manasottara on Pushkara, the seventh and outermost of Earth's continents.

The panel uses Prahlada, an impure asura who is purified, and whose prahlada or delight is in Krishna, to represent the refugee type of Bhagavata. Just as women, Shudras, and others who are inherently impure are purified through Bhagavata consecrations, so is Prahlada, but his prayer is for even greater purity. He invokes Narasimha as the "Tejas of tejas," the source of the brilliant conquering power burning through his vajra or diamond claws and teeth to destroy impurity, most notably any arrogance produced by the skillful practice of yoga. The location of this episode on Manasottara, "Boundary of the Mind," suggests that Narasimha's vajra teeth and claws operate with the sadhaka at the limit of his thinking.

Finally, the panel implies a specific Pancharatra consecration relevant to all impure people no matter what their ritual class or their caste.

Panel S5: Goddess Earth Worships Boar in the Region of Uttarakuru

THE STORY. This famous story began at the west-facing panel depicting Boar with Brahma (Panel W6).[36] Goddess Earth, who had not yet been divided into seven continents and oceans or populated, had somehow sunk down into the nether world of Rasatala (Taste) (*BP* 3.13.17 and 5.24.7). Asuras known as Panis live in Rasa like snakes, afraid of the Bhagavan's wheel Sudarshana and of Yama's curse.[37] Yama, of course, evokes the south. To rescue Goddess Earth from Rasa, Sacrifice as Person (Yajnapurusha) emerged from Brahma's nostril as a tiny boar (*varaha*) the size of a thumb and immediately swelled into enormous proportions and roared. Applauded by seers dwelling in the Jana, Tapa, and Satya worlds above Dhruva, Boar smelled around to find Goddess Earth, roared again, and plunged into the waters, as an elephant in play (*BP* 3.13.25–29). When he reached Rasatala, he found her "whom he had formerly sheltered in his abdomen" and lifted her up (*BP* 3.13.30). But then Hiranyaksha attacked.

The asura Hiranyaksha had been looking for a fight for a long while. He had first gone to the deva world (in the east), but found no one because Indra and the others had already fled. He had then entered the ocean for fun, played around for a thousand years, and frightened all its creatures. Then he had gone to Varuna's city called Vibhavari (in the west) and challenged Varuna, the protector of asura realms in the nether worlds and of ocean's creatures.[38] Varuna controlled his anger and told Hiranyaksha that if he wanted a good fight, he should find the primordial Person who takes up forms to defeat beings like him (*BP* 3.17.29–31). So the asura went down to the realm of Rasa to search him out.

When Hiranyaksha saw Boar carrying Goddess Earth, he ridiculed him as a wild animal stealing her who rightly belongs to the residents of Rasa where

she had fallen. Patiently, Boar rose out of the waters, placed Goddess Earth on them, and infused her with his supporting power to keep her from sinking again (*BP* 3.18.6–8). He and Hiranyaksha then began a long and bloody fight with maces (*gada*). Brahma and the seers arrived on the scene, and Brahma explained that ever since he had received a boon from him, Hiranyaksha had been a source of endless trouble. "Kill him," he urged Boar, "right now before night comes when asura power increases. Twilight (*samdhya*) is approaching and the auspicious hour (*muhurta*) of conquest (*abhijit*) is about to end" (*BP* 3.18.21–28).[39]

With a smile, Boar sprang at Hiranyaksha and struck his jaw but dropped his mace. Keeping to the code of warriors, the asura did not attack the weaponless opponent. Boar then called up his wheel Sudarshana and the asura attacked with mace, trident, and bare hands. He then resorted to magic and conjured pollutions of all sorts, including urine, feces, bones, blood and hair, and naked female rakshasis with spears and loosened hair, and bloodthirsty yakshas and rakshasas. But Sacrifice as Person dispersed them all with his purifying Sudarshana wheel. Hiranyaksha then grabbed Boar, but he broke the grip. Finally, while the asura pounded him with his fists, Boar hit him with his foot at the base of his ear and killed him. Brahma and the seers praised the asura's good fortune, for he had been killed by the Bhagavan's foot while looking at his face, a face that yogins desiring freedom from the subtle body based on falseness visualize in solitude through the enstasy of unified consciousness (*BP* 3.19.17–28).

With Hiranyaksha dead, Brahma and the seers began to praise Boar. He appeared to them holding Goddess Earth on his white tusks against the background of his enormous blue body (*BP* 3.13.33). They then alluded to Goddess Earth as the lotus womb Vasudeva had inseminated with Brahma's jiva, and to Boar as the father who placed his seed in her, after which she brought forth all the worlds (*BP* 3.13.42). Boar then scooped out a place for Goddess Earth, established her in it, and vanished (*BP* 3.13.46–47).

In the northern Kuru region of Jambu, Goddess Earth and others use Bhakti-yoga to worship Boar as depicted here (*BP* 5.18.34–39). Bhumidevi recites a prayer that ends with a description of the scene portrayed by the panel: "Just as an elephant kills its rival, Boar destroyed the asura Hiranyaksa; and just as an elephant in play, he lifted her up by his tusk and brought her out of the waters." Goddess Earth in northern Kuru thus gazes at herself being rescued by Sacrifice as Person. Parikshit identified Goddess Earth's prayer as a Upanishad that reveals Boar as Sacrifice as Person (*BP* 5.18.34). Boar is the object of sacrifice, the procedures of the sacrifice, and the fruits of the sacrifice all together in one Person. He is understood only through mantra. His manifest form is composed of sacrifices conducted with and without sacrificial posts, and his limbs are the great sacrifices. His ritual acts (*karma*) are pure. But he manifests himself in only three ages, which we know from the story of

Pururavas, are the Treta, Dvapara, and Kali Yugas, for there is no sacrifice in the Satya Yuga (Tagare 1976–1979 2: 729).

Sacrificial actions and their fruits, however, conceal the Bhagavan's unmanifest essential shape (*svarupa*). As the cause of sacrificial efficacy, all sacrifices are latent in his pores (*BP* 3.13.34). For that reason some call him the Causal Boar (*karana-sukara*) or Hari the Primeval Boar (*Hari-adi-sukara*) or Narayana the Primeval Boar (*Narayana-adi-sukara*) (*BP* 3.20.31; 3.20.37; 3.19.21). His true shape is perceived only when the body and senses are disciplined and the discriminating mind pierces through maya. Of course, maya creates, sustains, and destroys through her material "threads" (*guna*) only because of him: Just as a piece of iron moves about when a magnet draws near, so maya acts in the presence of Vasudeva as cause. Like the magnet, he is the uninvolved witness of the activities she performs because of his presence.

The panel, we now see, represents Agama's mantra system as Veda's supplement, both represented by Boar as the essential shape (*svarupa*) of the Sacrifice as Person.[40] Goddess Earth's Upanishad reveals mantra to be his self-expression and our means for understanding him; and mantra is at the center of Agama.[41] Its mantrashastra equals Veda's system in validity and efficacy, but differs in one crucial respect: Pancharatra mantras may be used to worship the vyuhas by any person of any caste once they have been consecrated (*SS* 2.1–12; Smith 1975: 516). Worship with those mantras (*upasana*), we now know, is equivalent to performance of Veda's fire sacrifices. Those qualified to perform Veda's fire rituals, however, retain them in Agama rites such as the homa (*SS* 2.4–5; 43–77a, esp. 67; Smith 1975: 516).[42] In other words, the Pancharatra Agama "translates" Veda's rites for the Kali Yuga in the same way the *Mahabharata* "translates" Veda's thought, and in principle both make Veda available to everyone. The image of Goddess Earth held by Boar in the late afternoon articulates Agama's rescue of Bharata as karmabhumi just as Kali Yuga darkness is about to begin.

Sacrifice as Person upholding Goddess Earth manifests himself through mantras employed through upasana in the context of loving devotion.[43] The context of the panel, flanked by Man-lion to the east and Mohini to the west, defines upasana here as prayoga: Only those who have first purified themselves through the Man-lion Consecration may receive consecrations into mantras through which they may gain "the whole earth."

In narrative, the Boar and Man-lion stories connect to each other directly, as the sequence of these two panels suggests, and also connect to the stories of Rama and Krishna. Boar and Man-lion are the first of three pairs of births undertaken by Jaya and Vijaya, doorkeepers in Vaikuntha cursed by Brahma's four Kumara sons (*BP* 3.15). Jaya and Vijaya were first born as the asura brothers Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha, then as the rakshasa brothers Ravana and Kumbhakarna, and finally as the humans Shishupala and Dan-

tavaktra. As Man-lion and Boar, the Bhagavan slew the first pair; as Rama and his brothers, he slew the second pair; and as Krishna, he slew the third pair. A sequence of sculpted panels, interrupted only by the southwest corner, link those stories. One east-facing panel refers to Rama (Panel E4), the next one to Krishna (Panel E5), and the two facing south after the corner refer to Krishna's "Summary" (Panels S2 and S3), followed by the Man-lion and Boar panels (S4 and S5). Jaya and Vijaya appear in the story depicted by the porch's south-facing corner panel (Panel SP3).

Those narrative and sculpted sequences denote Pancharatra sadhanas. Hanuman's prayer to Rama in the first panel signifies desire for freedom from ordinary householder life. That leads to desire for consecration articulated by Goddess Sri Lakshmi in the second panel. Krishna in the third and fourth panels distinguishes between the radical renouncer and the householder as "holy person" and reveals the options for those who seek consecration. Then in the Man-lion panel, Prahlada signifies the purification to prepare the sadhaka for diksha, and the Boar panel signifies the diksha's completion with the unction.

In sum, Boar holding Earth in a panel facing south depicts kriyashakti (Boar) transformimg bhutishakti (Goddess Earth) into a prosperous and protected world. Specifically, it signifies Shakti's ability to rescue, establish, fertilize, and preserve a kingdom through rites and armies sponsored by a Bhagavata king. The "Boar mantra" (*Varaha mantra*) expresses Sudarshana, who in turn expresses Shakti's iccha and kriya; they emerge when she "opens her eyes" as discussed in the *Ahirbudhnya-samhita*. Boar is Sacrifice as Person appearing as the ruler's rites to enable Sudarshana to permeate his army and weapons in the conquest of enemies (*AS* 30; Smith 1975: 54–55). The depiction also points to the highly secret sadhana of the "Great Unction" (*mahabhiseka*), during which the king worships through a Sudarshana yantra in a Mahendra mandala with a pot of water, which is poured over his head and the heads of his ministers (*AS* 39: Smith 1975: 58). Boar holds Goddess Earth while facing south because during prayoga, the Unobstructed formation's potency (*shakti*) releases brilliant and self-sufficient conquering power (*tejas*) to protect, expand, and fertilize the realm.

THE PANEL. This badly damaged panel depicts Boar as a crowned male with two pairs of arms and a boar's head (Figure 15.6). He stands on its western side, faces east, and turns slightly sideways toward the viewer. The image captures Boar springing up from Patala: he pushes off a ledge with his right foot and raises his left knee for the upward spring. Boar holds Goddess Earth with his front pair of hands; his right hand grasps her knees and his left hand reaches behind to grasp her left shoulder. His back pair of hands is badly damaged, but the conch in his left hand is visible and there are remains of the wheel positioned as a prayogachakra.



FIGURE 15.6. Panel S5: Goddess Earth worships Boar in the region of Uttarakuru (prior to repair). IFDI.

Goddess Earth is depicted as human female with one pair of arms sitting astride Boar's uplifted left thigh, but her entire right shoulder and arm are no longer visible. Her left arm bends up at the elbow, and her left hand may form a mudra at her chest. Her head and face are broken off, but she appears to gaze up at Boar's face while he gazes at her.

The Panis' realm appears in the panel at the bottom, where the crowned and multihooded naga under Goddess Earth forms the anjalimudra. His damaged hoods are visible behind the right side of his head. The upper body of a small female companion clings to his right side and looks upward toward Boar. The lower portions of both are missing. Above Boar and Goddess Earth are two males sitting, each with one pair of arms. The male above Boar appears to be springing up from his seat as if echoing Boar's active posture: his right leg bends forward at the knee and his left leg stretches back. He holds his right hand at his right breast, perhaps forming a mudra, and may raise his damaged left arm and hand in a gesture of praise. The other male figure, directly above Earth's head, repeats her passive posture and sits firmly, body erect as he bends his head downward to look at Boar. His damaged right hand at his chest may also form a mudra.

The panel depicts the vision Brahma and the seers received after Hiranyaksha's conquest during the abhijinmuhurta, but as replicated in the Northern Kuru region. Sacrifice as Person has picked up Goddess Earth from the surface of the water to establish her firmly in place so that Brahma's creation may continue. As he holds her, Brahma and seers in the highest realms praise them as Father and Mother. All three realms of spacetime thus appear in the panel: Figures at the top stand in the highest realm above Dhruva; the multihooded snake stands in the Pani's lowest realm at the bottom; and the tall Boar, who links the lowest to the highest, holds Goddess Earth in the middle where she belongs.

THE PANEL'S MEANINGS. According to the story, Boar slays Hiranyakashipu in the afternoon before sunset, which is where this panel stands.

The panel represents the Uttarakuru region of Jambu and depicts a portrayal of Boar rescuing Goddess Earth that was worshiped in sacred places throughout Bharata at the time this temple was built. The panel does not depict any Kurus worshiping, and unless Goddess Earth is to be understood as worshiping Boar as he holds her, she is not depicted as worshiping either. We are probably to assume that this familiar image is the icon they worship.

The upanishad that Goddess Earth prays to Boar reveals that knowledge of the mantra rites of Vedic sacrifice embodied by Boar is the key to the knowledge of everything (*BP* 5.18.35–39). As if to refute the non-Vedic teachings of the Buddhists, Jains, and Ajivikas, this prayer states that all of manifest existence depends on the mantras of Vedic sacrifice.

Finally, this and the previous panel appear to represent two ritual stages in the rule of a Bhagavata king. The previous panel of the Hari Region, where Prahlada worships the icon of Narasimha, represents his diksha consecration to the Man-lion mantras. This panel of the Uttarakuru region, where Goddess Earth worships Boar, represents the shakti of the kriya ceremonies he sponsors to protect his realm.[44]

Appendix 1: Who are the Bhagavatas?

Bhagavatas in the Padma-samhita

According to the *Padma-samhita*, Bhagavatas include Brahmins and non-Brahmins, both of whom receive diksha:

> A [Brahmin] Bhagavata is one who, along with his devoted love of the Bhagavan, worships him five times a day at home or in a temple according to the scriptures, who is born in a Bhagavata family, and who has received consecration. While they must also maintain their private worship, [Brahmin] Bhagavatas are the only ones who are allowed to perform liturgies for the benefit of others in a village or town and should be employed in one's home or in essential matters (*svatantra*). One [a non-Brahmin] who belongs to a non-Bhagavata lineage (*vamsha*) may be consecrated and maintain private worship, but may not perform worship for the benefit of others. Any Bhagavata [Brahmin or non-Brahmin]—whether by birth or consecration—is to be shown the highest respect and honor by all others. (*PS* 4.13–24, modifying Smith 1975: 236)

Brahmin Bhagavatas were to worship fives times daily: 1) they arise and go to the temple in the early morning (*abhigamana*); 2) they gather materials for worship at home (*upadana*); 3) they performa midday liturgical worship (*ijya*) after which they eat their main meal; 4) they study (*svadhyaya*); and 5) they practice yoga

and pious acts of worship at home or in the temple at evening (*yoga*) (*PS* 4.13; Smith 1975: 232). The three periods of sunrise (*abhigamana*), midday (*ijya*), and evening (*yoga*) correspond to the Vedic ideal of worship at the three "junctures" (*samdhya*). On the vimana, the abhigamana period corresponds to the north-facing side, the upadana and ijya periods correspond to the east-facing side, and the svadhyaya and yoga periods correspond to the south-facing side.

Uddhava's Description of Bhagavatas

When Uddhava stood before Krishna in Dvaraka (Panel S2, chapter 15), he divided worshipers into two groups (*BP* 11.6.45–48). One he called "servants" (*dasa*), the other he called seers and renouncers (*rishi* and *sannyasin*). The servants, Uddhava said, serve Krishna their whole life, whether sitting or lying, walking or standing, eating or playing. They wear Krishna's leftover sandal paste, flower garlands, clothes, and decorations, and they eat his leftover food. All they possess they have offered to Krishna and belongs to him; like servants they live on the master's leftovers. Unlike renouncers, servant Bhagavatas involve themselves in work (*karma*) and other people. They cross through the impenetrable darkness of samsara not through solitary absorption in the atman but rather through absorption in conversations with other devotees about Krishna—about his deeds, speech, and teaching, and about his world-enchanting manner as a human. Householders are refugees (*prapanna*) who give up reliance on all dharmas, as Krishna instructed Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gita* 18.65–66.

In contrast, seers and renouncers are essentially naked, clothed only in the directions (*vatarashana*), and through exertion on themselves (*shramana*) keep their semen "up high." They are pacified, free of impurity, and attain the "home" called *brahman* (*brahmakhya dhama*).

Brahma and Shiva's Description of Bhagavatas

Brahma and Shiva held a similar view. They said that it is less effective for those disposed toward evils to purify themselves through knowledge (*vidya*), study of scripture (*shrutadhyayana*), giving (*dana*), asceticism (*tapas*), and rites (*kriya*) than through faith in the "true" (*satshraddhaya*), which grows in those pure of self (*sattvamana*) listening to Krishna's glory (*BP* 11.6.9). They listed six types of devotees in two categories (*BP* 11.6.10–11).[1] The first is the renouncer, the muni who seeks Krishna's feet in the seat of consciousness (*hridaya*) moist with love; he corresponds to Uddhava's naked seers and renouncers. The

second category corresponds to Uddhava's householder "servant," but divided into five kinds.

Of the five, Brahma and Shiva first mentioned the Satvatas, who are "prudent" or "judicious" (*atmavat*) and seek similarity to the vyuhas in their vibhuti (*BP* 11.6.10). They correspond to Uddhava's "servants," who rely entirely on Krishna as their master to provide for them as he pleases in response to their own ritual use of mantras for the sake of worldly and otherworldly prosperity, success, and well-being.[2] Narada illustrates that type of person, and the description he gave Vyasa of bhaktiyoga described those devotees (*BP* 1.5.37–38). Disciplined devotees, Narada said, invoke the names of the four vyuhas when they perform an act (*karma*), one that will bear future results (*phala*); when they perform the act, they dedicate it to Krishna by extolling his qualities and names and by meditating on them. Specifically, they recite the prayer to the four vyuhas: "Veneration to Vasudeva the Bhagavan, and veneration to Pradyumna, to Aniruddha, and to Samkarshana." By so dedicating all their acts they worship the formless Sacrifice as Person (Yajnapurusha) embodied in mantras and perceive things correctly. The *Paushkara-samhita* described that as the mantra-siddhanta system (*shastra*), not to be confused with the Mantrasiddhanta Path (*Paushkara-samhita* 38.297). In Smith's condensation, "Bhagavan then says that that system [*shastra*] which deals with the mystic comprehension of the *vyuhas,* the *murtis,* the *vibhavas* and *ganas* through the initiation into the *mantras* and all that they signify and recall—that is called '*mantra-siddhanta*' (297). He who comprehends and undertakes practice in accordance with this *mantra* system will have all benefits accrue to him" (Smith 1975: 291).

Brahma and Shiva's second type consists of "thinkers" or "imaginers" (*chitta*). They worship at sunrise, midday, and evening in order to transcend heaven. They correspond to the ideal Bhagavatas of the *Paushkara-samhita,* whose sadhana requires skill in mentally visualizing (*dhyana*) the various forms of Vasudeva through the use of an icon (*vigraha*) while reciting mantras with mudras. The *Paushkara-samhita* (38.300) describes such devotees as employing the tantra-siddhanta system (*shastra*); and Krishna described its rites to Uddhava (*BP* 11.27).

The third type consists of sacrificers who offer oblations into the Vedic fire to Krishna's feet. Only those born to classes qualified for Vedic rites can perform that homa ritual (primarily Brahmins), an elite subset of those who use icons; they add rites of the fire in accord with the tantra-siddhanta system (*shastra*) (*BP* 11.27.36–41; *SS* 6.132–190; 19.46–116; Smith 1975: 519–520; 529).

The fourth type consists of yogins who practice self-discipline to transcend maya and develop siddhis. Their yogic sadhana is based on the "lotus-tree" in the subtle body and its series of wheels (*BP* 11.12–15; "wheel-lotus tree": 11.14.31–46, 11.12.17–24, and 11.15). The *Paushkara-samhita* (38.302) says

such devotees employ the tantrantara system (*shastra*). In Smith's words: "That system which enjoins yogic concentration on one or two or three or four of the *vyuha*-manifestations with or without their attendant deities—according to the person's ability—that system is called '*tantrantara*' (302)" (Smith 1975: 291–292). That matches *tantrantara* as meaning "the interior, contents, soul, heart" of the "tantra," the essential part of worship. According to Monier-Williams (1964: 436b), *tantrantariya* referred to the samkhyan philosophers. After Krishna described Yoga, which leads to the awakened condition of the sant, he said it is the "secret of samkhya-yoga" (*BP* 11.13.38), suggesting that it is the tantrantara of the tantrantariya.

The fifth type consists of supreme Bhagavatas (*paramabhagavata*). Brahma and Shiva said nothing more about them. As we shall see, they correspond to sants.

Poykai's Description of Bhagavatas

Brahma and Shiva began their list of five types of Satvatas with the most common type, the prudent. They ended it with the rarest and most valued type, the supreme Bhagavata or sant. They ranked the others in between. Poykai, a Tamil poet from the Pallava realm, listed five means for worshiping the Bhagavan, but reversed the order of ranking and began with the most valued.

In *Mutal tiruvantati* 70, Poykai said that five means for worshiping Goddess Shri with Vishnu (*Tirumal*) are tamam, velvi, tantira, mantira, and namam. Leaving tamam aside for the moment, the others are easily identifiable within the Pancharatra context. *Velvi* means "fire sacrifice" and corresponds to the homa ritual employed by Brahmins following the tantra-siddhanta system. *Tantira* is tantra and corresponds to the essential rites focussed on an icon using mudras, mantras, and offerings according to the tantra-siddhanta system. *Mantira* is mantra and corresponds to access to the Bhagavan's multiplicity through mantras according to the mantra-siddhanta system.[3] *Namam* means "name" and refers to reciting in contemplation Vishnu's "thousand names" (*sahasranama*).

That leaves *tamam*. As the Sanskrit word *dama* it means "flower garland" or "necklace of beads"; later Sri Vaishnavas interpreted it in this stanza to mean worship with flower garlands.[4] Yet as far as I know, the practice of worshiping Sri Vishnu with flower garlands does not represent a specific sadhana, whereas the other four in the list do. We therefore must look elsewhere for the meaning of tamam. The answer lies in interpreting it as the Sanskrit word *dhamam*.

Dhamam or *dhama* denotes Vasudeva's "supreme realm"; Krishna referred to his "highest home" as the dhama parama. In Tamil useage it also means "body." The double meaning of tamam as "supreme realm" and "body"

points us to the yogin in the tantrantara-siddhanta system. The central part of its essential liturgy, in Smith's summary, "enjoins yogic concentration on one or two or three or four of the *vyuha*-manifestations with or without their attendant deities—according to the person's ability" (Smith 1975: 291–292). If we interpret Poykai's use of *tamam* to refer to that yogic practice based on the "lotus-tree" in the body, tamam eventually leads the yogin to the condition of the sant. In Poykai's list, *tamam* denotes the yogin and implies the sant, the supreme Bhagavata whose body is a home for Krishna (*BP* 11.20.29–37).

All the types of householder Bhagavatas described by Poykai, the *Pauhskara-samhita*, and Brahma and Shiva may be arranged in hierarchical order, with the most common type at the bottom and the supreme type at the top. The first five are Bhagavatas who received diksha; of them, only Brahmins normally employ homa. The sixth, recitation of Vishnu's "thousand names," may presumably be practiced prior to diksha.

THE HIERARCHY OF THE BHAGAVATA COMMUNITY

Poykai's Methods	Paushkara's Systems	Brahma and Shiva's Types
[Sant]	[Sant]	Supreme Bhagavata
Tamam	*Tantrantara*	*Yogin siddhanta*
Velvi	[Tantra-siddhanta with homa rites]	Fire sacrificer
Tantira	*Tantra-siddhanta*	Imaginer
Mantira	*Mantra-siddhanta*	The Prudent
Namam	[Thousand names]	[Thousand names]

The "Summary" Summarized

When Krishna began his "Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine," he immediately separated the category of radical renouncer from the category of servant. He called the renouncer *rishi*, *sannyasin*, and *avadhuta*, and told Uddhava stories about two; one story was adapted from Buddhist lore and one from Jaina lore. The temple designers caught those shramana allusions in their depiction of Dattatreya as avadhuta. Krishna described the category of servants as men and women of all ritual classes and castes who had "taken refuge in me"(*BP* 11.10.1–13). His categories acknowledge the validity of the hierarchical and segmented society based on Vedic prescriptions for each ritual class (*varna*), stage of life (*ashrama*), and caste or clan (*kula*), yet they observe the order of that society only insofar as it does not interfere with serving him.

Bhagavatas, he said, are not required to follow the Vedic injunctions for ritual action (*karma*)—indeed Bhagavatas who are Shudras, women,

and "aliens" are not allowed to—but ideally they practice the disciplined way of life called yama. Yama consists of noninjury (*ahimsa*), truth (*satya*), noncovetousness (*asteya*), nonclinging (*asanga*), modesty (*hri*), nonhoarding (*asamchaya*), affirmation of Veda (*astikya*), sexual restraint (*brahmacharya*), moderation in speech (*mauna*), constancy (*sthairya*), forgiveness (*kshama*), and freedom from anxiety (*abhaya*) (*BP* 11.19.33). Presumably, all Bhagavatas of whatever caste or gender are to affirm those attitudes and practices.

Among Bhagavatas, however, there are the especially pious. They add activities called niyama to their basic yama way of life. For Krishna the devotee who serves him through niyama is a "holy" person (*sadhu*), and because the sadhu follows both niyama and yama, the holy person will attain whatever he or she wants (*BP* 11.19.35). Krishna's sadhu corresponds to the sadhaka of the mantra-siddhanta system. Krishna also described the sadhu as the disciple of an acharya who knows Krishna and whose own desire is pacified, which implies that some acharyas do not meet that standard—for example, Durvasas. The sadhu regards the acharya as Krishna himself and serves Krishna by serving him (*BP* 11.10.5). Through "serving the acharya," the disciple develops the perception of atman underlying everything. That perception enables him or her to develop a nonclinging attitude toward family, wealth, and property. Since knowledge of atman satisfies all desires, clinging to any "thing" disappears (*BP* 11.10.6–13).[5]

Importantly, the eleven elements of niyama (*BP* 11.19.34) correspond precisely to the practice taught in the "The Single-Yet-Many Consecration" described by Narada in the *Satvata-samhita* (16–22; Smith 1975: 526–531). Purification (*saucha*), the first niyama, corresponds to purification of the sadhaka either through the special ceremony of "The Man-lion Consecration" (*nrisimha-diksha*), or through the initial portion of the diksha itself (*SS* 18.160–174; Smith 1975: 528).[6] The skills that the candidate must have acquired in preparation for diksha are the next three elements of niyama: the repetition of mantras to oneself (*japa*), ascetic practice (*tapas* or *vrata*), and, if a Brahmin male, the fire sacrifice (*homa*). The sadhaka will use those skills during the diksha ceremony and in puja the rest of his or her life.

The next seven niyamas describe the sadhana. The sadhaka lives with faith (*shraddha*) in the entire Agama system. The sadhaka gives hospitality (*atithya*) to the worthy, which means to scholars, Brahmins, renunciants, priests, acharyas, and other exemplars of Bhagavata Dharma. Using his or her own icons at home, or using visualized icons, or icons in a temple, the sadhaka pays regular ritual homage to Krishna and occasionally visits tirthas. The sadhaka serves other devotees and cultivates contentment. And throughout his or her life, the sadhaka serves the acharya who performed the diksha (*BP* 11.19.34; *SS* 21; Smith 1975: 530–531).

Krishna described the ideal holy person following those niyamas in some detail. The male patron (*yajamana*) of a temple with wealth to spend was an

ideal sadhaka. He was a deviant householder, however, because his life as Krishna's servant forced him on occasion to behave oddly; living by yama and niyama, he abandoned his own dharma (*svadharma*) in order to live with complete devotion to Krishna (*BP* 11.11.26–33). He knew, of course, that the dharma he abandoned was itself ordained by Krishna through Veda, and he knew full well the karmic consequences of abandoning it, yet he gave it up in order to live only for the Bhagavan. Above all, he viewed himself and all that was his, family included, as belonging to his master (*BP* 11.11.35). He saw himself as Krishna's slave.

With single-minded devotion the pious sadhaka lived a life centered on the icons and rituals in home and temple (*BP* 11.11.34–49). He saw, touched, and worshiped Krishna's symbols (*linga*) and Krishna's devotees (*bhaktajana*). He sponsored festivals in Krishna's "houses" with song, dance, instrumental music, and assemblies of Brahmins. He organized processions (*yatra*) and made great offerings (*balividhana*) at all yearly temple celebrations. He received diksha into the rituals of Veda and Tantra and observed vows pleasing to Krishna. Alone or with others he eagerly established Krishna's icons with faith and provided flower gardens, groves of trees, recreation grounds, and shelters in town (*puramandir*) for their ritual service. As a servant, he swept and cleaned Krishna's "house," smearing cow dung water on its floor and drawing mandalas. He offered his master only "unused" articles and the most precious of everything, but never called attention to himself when doing so.

The sadhaka also tried to transform his sexual energy and intensity into meditative attentiveness (Krishna said nothing explicitly about females, but the male exemplar implies the female). He was expected to avoid any situation that stimulated sexual interest. Control over deep-rooted sexual desire, Krishna said, enabled the devotee to detach his mind from all objects of the senses, and control emerged when the sadhaka removed himself bodily from women, and from those who delight in women, to sit comfortably in a solitary place. There he disciplined his sexual energy by addressing it to Krishna through vivid attentiveness (*BP* 11.14.27–30; 11.26.22–24).

The sadhaka prepares for enlightened devotion, Krishna explained, by purifying the intellect (*buddhi*) and strengthening its material "thread of purity" (*sattva guna*) under the acharya's guidance (11.13.1–3). Once the sattva guna conquers the "threads" of passion (*rajas*) and delusion (*tamas*), the intellect (*buddhi*) is pure. Ten liturgical elements strengthen the sattva guna and regulate the others: Agama, water, ascetics as the "progeny" of renunciation, solitary places for meditation, auspicious times to worship such as the brahmamuhurta, devotional acts performed without a fruit in mind, rebirth through diksha, practice of visualization (*dhyana*), recitation of mantras, and participation in sacramental rites (*samskara*) (*BP* 11.13.4–7).[7] Through the strengthened and finally pacified sattva guna, the normal sense of "I" in the intellect disappears.[8] The sadhaka will then live conscious of Vasudeva

Krishna as his or her center, will dwell in samadhi, and will truly be "awake." From that time on, all that "he" or "she" does is only previous karma working itself out (*BP* 11.13.30–37).

Among all those means for developing continuous remembrance of him, Krishna said the easiest by far is the "service of the holy" (*sadhuseva*), who in this case are the sants (*BP* 11.11.47). Clinging (*sanga*) to the "true" (*sat*) is the easy way to attain the "devotion of the true" (*satbhakti*). Satsanga leads to satbhakti, a supreme secret (*parama guhya*) Krishna revealed to Uddhava (*BP* 11.11.48–49). Krishna binds himself to those who cling to the sants (*satsanga*), because they cut away their attachments to anything else. Although Krishna's entrance into consciousness as a permanent resident is a gradual process, opening the door for him is easy. Clinging to sants, Krishna said, is a method superior to yoga, samkhya, dharma, Veda study, tapas, renunciation, acts without desire for their fruits, gifts at sacrifices (*dakshina*), vows, fire sacrifices, the internal repetition of mantras, bathing places (*tirtha*), niyama, and yama (*BP* 11.12.1–2). It is a method suited to any refugee.

Clinging to sants was the method Krishna advised Uddhava to follow when he sent him to Badari, where the seer Nara clings to the seer Narayana as the paradigm of satsanga for the entire kalpa: "Ignore the prescriptions and prohibitions of Veda, renounce both acts that produce (*pravritta*) and acts that do not produce (*nivritta*), give up what you should learn and what you have already learned, and take refuge (*sharana*) in me alone. I am the atman in all embodied beings and because I am the origin of all atmans (*sarvatmabhava*), you will live without anxiety (*abhaya*) (*BP* 11.12.14–15).

Krishna then explained the basis for that "easy" development of enlightened consciousness as the "wheel and lotus tree" in the subtle body paralleling the spinal column (*BP* 11.12.17–24).[9] The soul (*jiva*), he said, manifests itself in each person through the sequence of wheels (*chakra*) located in the subtle body (*sukshmasharira*). That sequence, from the root (*muladhara*) between the anus and genital region to the thousand-petal blossom (*sahasrara*) at the top of the head, parallels the spinal column of the gross body (*BP* 11.12.17–24; Tagare 1976–1979 2: 1978, note). The jiva embodied as a human is but a tiny replica of Brahma's jiva embodied as spacetime; the human body is thus a microcosmic mode of the spacetime in which it lives.

Krishna invoked the metaphor of the ancient tree of samsara to describe Brahma's cosmic body (*BP* 11.12.8–23). Two kinds of "birds" eat its fruits, he said, vultures in the villages and geese (*hamsa*) in the forest. The vultures are those who live for sensual and worldly gratification, the geese are renouncers seeking moksha. But whoever, through the service of the guru, knows that both forms are made of maya truly knows Veda. The tree of samsara repeats itself in the human body as the "wheel and lotus tree," which the sadhaka transcends through diksha and the acharya's guidance of a sadhana that operates like an axe: "Through service to a guru and through single-minded

devotion, sharpen the axe of knowledge (*vidyakuthara*), chop down the tree within the body, free the soul (*jiva*), attain the atman, and throw away the weapon" (*BP* 11.12.24).

Any highly motivated sadhaka who, for reasons of economics or personality or gender or caste, was only minimally able to live the life of the pious elite had easy recourse to sants. While the sant viewed himself as Krishna's slave, others viewed him as Krishna; pious devotees of any sort could easily serve the slave of God who embodied God for them. As the Tamil poet Nammalvar said, they "worship at the feet of his men who work at his feet" (*Tiruvaymoli* 8.102).[10]

Clinging to sants was an easy but powerful sadhana and involved the recitation of names (*namam*) cited by Poykai. Many kinds of beings dominated by passion (*rajas*) and delusion (*tamas*), Krishna said, had attained his feet through name recitation, including nonhumans from rakshasas to vidyadharas, and humans such as Vaishyas, Shudras, women, and members of the lowest castes (*BP* 11.12.3–4). Often their motives for clinging had been mixed and impure, but clinging to sants gradually purified them. For example, Krishna cited the gopis when he was a boy in Gokula; their initial motivation was erotic desire (*kama*), yet after he had left them for Mathura, desire caused them to think of him exclusively and they finally attained his realm, the supreme *brahman* (*brahma parama*) (*BP* 11.12.8–13).

That example is significant, for it identifies the sant as Krishna and devotees clinging to the sant as gopis. The desire motivating devotees to cling to the sant might indeed be "impure"; the male or female devotee may serve the sant for erotic reasons. Continued service of Krishna through serving the sant, the example tells us, will refine that "impure" desire, burn off its erotic nature, and let the soul's complete satisfaction in Krishna manifest itself. The improper or unlawful can thus be a means to the purest of goals.

The example also reveals that in principle Krishna made enlightenment available to the vast majority of the Dravida population classified by Veda as either Shudra or polluted. Since devotion to Krishna would purify even naturally polluted "dog-eaters," untouchables could also become sants (*BP* 11.14.21). If so, then high-caste devotees in eighth-centry Kanchipuram and elsewhere may have worshiped at the feet of formally polluted but now pure devotees. Nammalvar described the most extreme version of that possibility when he said, "Go down, far down, to the lowliest outcastes of outcastes: If they are the intimate henchmen of our lord . . . then even the slaves of their slaves are our masters" (*Tiruvaymoli* 3.7.9).[11]

Improper acts or thoughts as a means to continuous remembrance of Krishna means that devotees should behave as if they actually see Krishna in everything, whether externally in the most polluted of beings or internally in their own unclean desires and feelings. If they practice the perception of Krishna, the perception of Krishna will emerge (*BP* 11.29.8–16). They are to

try to view all people—good and evil, Brahmin and tribal (*pulkasa*), tranquil and ferocious—as Krishna's manifestations. Disregarding the ridicule of friends and relations, they are to prostrate like a stick before all beings, including dogs, corpse-burners, cattle, and donkeys.

Until perception of him in all things has been established permanently, Krishna said, sadhakas should worship him through disciplined words, thoughts, and body; exercising all three together is the best means to enlightenment (*BP* 11.19.17–22). Yet even imperfectly performed verbal, mental, and physical rites with him in mind are useful. Ordinary and fruitless acts normally against dharma, such as fleeing out of fear and weeping out of grief, are in fact dharma if Krishna is their focus. That recalls Kamsa who attained moksha by fearing him, the gopis who attained moksha by grieving at his absence, and Shishupala who attained moksha by hating him (*BP* 11.29.21; Tagare 1976–1979 5: 2107). Adharma used to attain the highest goal is a practical method Krishna advocated to conclude his "Summary": "This is the perception of the intelligent and of the prudent, that here one attains true being by means of the unlawful, and by means of the body that will die attains the righteousness that is me" (*BP* 11.29.22).

The Sant

The sant may or may not be an acharya, but possesses an intellect (*buddhi*) that perceives Krishna and therefore knows *brahman*. Sants purify themselves by offering every sacrifice (*yajna*) to Krishna and eating only his leftovers (BG 3.13). But the sant's spoken words purify others, as Krishna explained: "The intelligent person gives up clinging to the 'evil' and clings to the 'true.' Sants cut off clinging to the sensual mind with their words" (*BP* 11.26.26). In Tapasyananda's translation, Krishna also said: "The holy ones [*sants*] are persons who depend on none except Me, who always think of Me, who are tranquil, same-sighted and egoless, who are above the pairs of opposites or contrary conditions of life, and who do not care to receive gifts or to accumulate riches. . . . Among them there will always be talks on My excellences and achievements, which have a very beneficial effect on all. Their talks eradicate the sinful tendencies in the minds of people who take them in through their ears." Krishna then explained how sants' words purify: "Those who respectfully hear such devotional talks, glorify them in songs and recitals, and feel delighted with them, become devoted to Me and develop firm faith in Me as also delight in My service and contemplation. . . . Holy men [*sants*] with knowledge of Brahman and established in tranquillity are the sole support of men struggling in the ocean of Samsara, just as a strong boat is for people shipwrecked on the sea" (*BP* 11.26.27–32; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 4: 135).

Sants tell the Krishna story to purify those who cling to them in satsanga because sound (*shabda*) manifests the *brahman* in their consciousness. Sound stimulates the listener's consciousness through the ears; what is heard shapes what the listener thinks, feels, and sees. Like a mantra, the Krishna story told by a sant transforms the refugee's consciousness, just as in the previous kalpa it transformed the five-year-old Shudra named Narada when he heard seers tell the Krishnakatha at a sacrifice. Because sants "stand" in *brahman* (*BG* 2.72) they "stand" in Krishna (*BG* 6.15) and perceive Krishna wherever they look, inside themselves or outside, and the words they speak out of that unified consciousness embody that perception and transform the consciousness of those who listen attentively. From mouth to ear through spoken words, Krishna in the consciousness of the speaker enters the consciousness of the listener and gradually takes it over. The Tamil poet Nammalvar described the process vividly in *Tiruvaymoli* (as translated by A. K. Ramanujan):

He who took the seven bulls
    by the horns
  he who devoured the seven worlds
made me his own cool place
  in heaven
and thought of me
  what I thought of him
and became my own thoughts (1.8.7)

My lord
  who swept me away forever
    into joy that day,
made me over into himself
and sang in Tamil
his own songs
through me:
what shall I say
  to the first of things,
    flame
      standing there,
what shall I say to stop? (7.9.1)

Poets,
  beware, your life is in danger:
the lord of gardens is a thief,
      a cheat,
  master of illusions;

he came to me,
a wizard with words,
sneaked into my body,
my breath,
with bystanders looking on
but seeing nothing,
he consumed me
life and limb,
and filled me,
made me over
into himself. (10.7.1)[12]

Listening to sants is letting oneself catch on fire (*BP* 11.10.12–13). The fire burns up the desires that flow through the gross and subtle body as sap flows through a tree, leaving only the purified soul's innate desire for Krishna. Fire returns gold to its natural shining form by burning off impurities; similarly, devotion to Krishna purifies the jiva of karmic impurity and inevitably the jiva resorts to Krishna residing in the atman.

The holy person (*sadhu*) successful in cutting down the internal wheel and lotus tree with the axe of knowledge becomes a supreme Bhagavata, a sant, neither householder nor renouncer, neither of the village nor of the forest. With eyes now fully "open," the center of the sant's consciousness (*hridi*) is a sanctum (*garbhagriha*) housing Krishna, and his body is its vimana (*BP* 11.20.29–30). All "Vishnu-houses" coalesce in the sant: Vaikuntha, atman, and vimana. The sant is Krishna's dhamam on earth, a walking temple, the body of God alive in our midst.

Sants participate in true being and thus have "true devotion" (*satbhakti*) (*BP* 11.14.12–30). Dwelling in *brahman* they experience freedom from all worldly desire, complete satisfaction, and a pleasure (*sukha*) unknown to normal consciousness. They perceive Krishna in the atman and are completely satisfied wherever they happen to be; they desire nothing, not even moksha. And their satbhakti attracts Krishna like nothing else: "Nothing becomes dearer to me, not [Brahma born of] my womb, not Shankara and not Samkarshana, not Shri and not even my own Self. To be purified by the dust of his feet, I walk with the muni who desires nothing, is at peace, has no enmity, and views everything equally" (*BP* 11.14.15). Sants experience a "melting" (*drava*) of thought (*chitta*), which produces "gooseflesh" (*romaharsha*) over the body, tears of joy, verbal stammering, weeping when they feel separated from Krishna, occasional loud laughs at the ways of maya, and uninhibited singing and dancing. Their consciousness is unified (*yoga*) through perceptual participation (*bhakti*) in Krishna, and such bhaktiyoga purifies polluted people and Goddess Earth herself (*BP* 11.14.23–24).

Appendix 2: Vasudeva's Path in the *Satvata-samhita*

The Satvata System

To perceive God in all things and all things in God is to be wide awake (*sambuddha*). If one is wide awake, one's death will be "extinguishing into *brahman*" (*brahmanirvana*) and eternal presence in God's supreme home (*dhama parama*). Only a few Bhagavatas attain this goal, because it requires the sadhaka's full attention day and night and God's grace. But every serious devotee can begin walking the path even if most go only the minimum distance. The path is "Approaching the Honey of the Lotus Feet," and the feet are Krishna's as he dances on Kaliya. Vasudeva described this path to the Plower as a body of teachings now found in the *Satvata-samhita*.

According to the first chapter of the *Satvata-samhita*, in the Treta Yuga the Vasudeva formation is perceived as red (*rakta*) in color. His Plower formation asks him why and he says that his color depends on the faith of his devotees; in the Treta Yuga their faith is mixed with passion (*raga*) and therefore he appears red. The Plower asks Vasudeva how to remove this passion. He answers that passion has difficulty remaining in refugees (*prapanna*) who turn devout attention to three modes of the Supreme *Brahman* (*parama brahma*). The first mode is as the supreme (*para*), the second is as formation (*vyuha*), and the third is as secondary emanation (*vibhava*) (*SS* 1.22–27). Vasudeva teaches the Plower how to worship these three modes and says his teachings constitute the Satvata system (*satvata-shastra*). The Satvata system thus emerges from a conversation within the

Supreme *Brahman* between the primal formation of pure consciousness and its first rearrangement as consciousness intentionally deluded.

Later the Plower teaches this Satvata system to Parashurama (Rama with the Axe), who by then resides in the Malaya Mountains in the ancient realm of the Pandyas and Cheras (*SS* 1; Smith 1975: 515–516). Sometime later the deva seer Narada visits Parashurama and learns this secret teaching from him. Parashurama tells Narada to pass it on to the seers living in ashrams in the surrounding Malaya Mountains. Narada's teaching then becomes the scripture compiled among Dravidas as the *Satvata-samhita*.

In this context Parashurama's famous axe (*parashu*) is noteworthy. It represents "nonclinging" (*asanga*) as the instrumental means to remove the passion that causes one to see Vasudeva as red in color. Krishna refers to this axe in *Bhagavad-gita* 15.1–6, where he tells Arjuna to cut down the cosmic fig tree. The fig tree known as asvattha or pippala is a metaphor for a material body infused with the sap of passion; the body may be Brahma's body of spacetime or the sadhaka's body or both. The fig tree's well-nourished root springs from a seed dropped by a bird up high on a host tree; the root throws out branches in all directions and sends subsidiary roots down to the ground to create a shaded world. Birds restlessly flit from branch to branch to eats its figs. Krishna tells Arjuna to use the axe of nonclinging (*asanga-shastra*) to chop down this tree and then, like a free bird, fly to Krishna's supreme home (*dhama parama*) beyond directional space and chronological time. Vasudeva teaches the details of this "chopping" to the Plower in the *Satvata-samhita*. "Chopping" with nonclinging is the only way to approach and taste the honey of Krishna's lotus feet.

Consecration to Man-lion

Chopping at the fig tree with the axe of nonclinging begins when a man or woman of any class or caste seeks refuge at the feet of an acharya. The refugee then lives with the acharya for months to receive training and purification (*SS* 16.1–37; Smith 1975: 526). The refugee's waking consciousness during this period is like a raging ocean full of "graspers" (*graha*) and resists being banked, dammed, or channeled by the acharya's discipline. The most powerful means to begin building the required embankment (*setu*) is "Consecration to the Lion as Man" or the "Man-lion Consecration" (*nrisimha-diksha*). Anyone may receive it and most devotees require it. The consecration ceremonies last at least seven days and possibly months; it is described in chapter 15 at Panel S4 (*SS* 17; Smith 1975: 527–528). They confer on the sadhaka a twelve-syllable mantra to kill the sin and impurity of waking consciousness centered on "This am I" (*ahamkarana*).[1] And they commit the sadhaka to the daily worship of Man-lion, for which there are specific mantras and secret teachings (*upanishad*). Many

sadhakas appear to remain at this first stage of the path, which may account for the Man-lion shrines found throughout South Asia.

After further training, the sufficiently cleansed refugee may receive the first of a set of three consecrations (*diksha-traya*). The first is "Consecration to a Secondary Emanation" (*vibhava-diksha*). It contains two parts and qualifies the sadhaka to perform private worship with mantras and icon (*vibhava*) solely for his or her own benefit (*svarthapuja*). Only priests receive consecrations that qualify them to perform worship for the benefit of others (*pararthapuja*). Consecration to vibhava worship appears to have been the most common diksha for those sadhakas, like Pallavamalla, who went beyond the Man-lion Consecration.

Vibhava-diksha, Part One

Preparation for this consecration begins with the auspicious sound of a bell (*ghanta /mani*) (*SS* 18.25b). The acharya employs a mantra to invoke the four formations into himself, purifies himself, and enters a newly constructed hall (*mandapa*) and blesses the waiting sadhaka. The acharya, who embodies all four formations, uses mantras to transform the implements for worship into devas. He then invokes the "Mantra of the Pillar of Blazing Light" (*visakhayupa-mantra*) to preside throughout the ceremony.[2]

Many rites follow; the first ones "heat" the sadhaka. Two branding irons are placed in a fire near the acharya; one has the design of a wheel (*chakra*) and the other a conch (*shankha*), as used today in Pancaratra rites followed by Sri Vaishnavas.[3] When they are properly hot the acharya burns away the defilement of the sadhaka's gross body by branding him or her as God's property. He burns the wheel onto the right shoulder and the conch onto the left to make the sadhaka God's property. When dressed according to the prescribed rites, this slave resembles the Master, who likewise bears the wheel on his right and the conch on his left. Ashvaghosha in his first-century "Life of the Buddha" (*Buddhacharita*) appears to have referred to these householder sadhakas as "wheel-bearers" (*chakradhara*).[4] Nandivarman joined their ranks seven centuries later, as Kalikanri tells us in his poem about the rites at the Temple of the Eight-Armed Lord in Attiyur. Nandivarman's voice wonders whether the acharya is Krishna who slew the elephant Kuvalayapida and lifted the mountain Govardhana, and then comments on the red-hot branding iron of the wheel, which the acharya holds before him:

> The elephant feared
> The man of wondrous deeds
> Who held the great bell of a mountain
> High to the clouds against the black rain,
> Is he the cowherd

who held its tusk that day?
He recites Veda in front of me
And holds the wheel
Of burning light
Glowing like the light
Of heaven's justice,
"Who is this person?"
I ask,
"I am the one dwelling in the house
Of the Eight-Armed-Lord"
he says.[5]

Once branded, the sadhaka is to feel the Bhagavan permeating his or her entire body, worships the Ruler as "supporter" and "supported," and becomes the abode of devas. The sadhaka's microcosmic body and Brahma's macrocosmic bodies have fused. The acharya wraps a red thread around the sadhaka's body and he or she visualizes bondage by the "passionate thread" of the twenty-five constituents of reality (*tattvas*) other than the atman, and the presence within of the four formations and everything else (*SS* 18.111–199; Smith 1975: 528–529). The sadhaka now possesses Brahma's sovereignty (*aishvarya*).

This "heating" gives way to a "cooling." The slave sits in Brahma's sovereign place and the "oceans" within their respective bodies are now the same ocean of consciousness. The acharya infuses the "milk" of sacred lore and mantras into this ocean to make it the Milk Ocean. This is the way Kalikanri describes this cooling part of Nandivarman's consecration:

Through the coolness of his nature
He teaches those in heaven and elsewhere
the arts
Veda
books on justice
ceremonies
and the meaning of mantras
Adjusted by grace to their nature,
Like the Ocean of Waves, home to
the tall mountain
the black gem
the Goddess on the Lotus
and the conch,
"Who is this person?"
I ask,
"I am the one dwelling in the house
Of the Eight-Armed-Lord"
he says.

A portion (*amsha*) of Vishnu known as Unconquered (*ajita*) is now planted at the base of the body as its tortoise-like "supporter" and at the top as the deva-like "supported." Ajita uses devas and asuras to churn the Milk Ocean and produce the elements of a long and prosperous royal life for the conjoined Brahma and sadhaka. Some go to devas and others to asuras, but Ajita keeps majesty (*shri*) and the Kaustubha gem for his self.

Vibhava-diksha, Part Two

In the second part of the vibhava-diksha, the sadhaka's identification with Brahma shifts to identification with Vasudeva and he or she receives the root of all mantras, the eight-syllable *Om namo narayanaya*.[6] This second part is also known as the "one-yet-many consecration" (*ekaneka-diksha*) because it yields three results depending on the sadhaka's intent: material enjoyment alone (*bhoga*), material enjoyment together with the isolation of the atman known as kaivalya, or only kaivalya. The sadhaka's formal resolution (*sankalpa*) determines which mantras he or she receives, their consequent sadhanas, and the fruits produced (*SS* 19.123–182; Smith 1975: 530).

The liturgy of part two begins after the sadhaka has slept, and in the morning the acharya analyzes his or her dreams. He determines the rites appropriate to what the dreams reveal about the sadhaka. For them the sadhaka sits in a drawn mandala infused with the Bhagavan's presence. The acharya places his hand on the sadhaka's head, purifies him or her with mantras, and wraps a cloth around the eyes. He has the blindfolded sadhaka offer rites of hospitality (*arghya*) to the material form of the eight-syllable mantra (*mantra-murti*), which is a stalk of kusha or darbha grass (Smith 1980: 83).

The acharya modifies the mantra according to the sadhaka's ritual status and whispers it into the sadhaka's right ear. The acharya Vedanta Deshika (born 1268) says that male members of the twice-born ritual classes (usually Brahmins in southern India) receive the root mantra in its Vedic form, with the dative suffix and the syllable *Om: Om namo narayanaya*. But women of the twice-born classes and all Shudras and others receive it in its tantric form without the dative suffix and *Om*: either as *Namo narayana* or *Namo narayanam*. Even though these distinctions are important, they are nevertheless superficial, because, Deshika says, all three versions of the mantra have the same validity and everyone may use the tantric versions. Only the Vedic version is restricted to the twice-born (Vedanta Deshika 1956: 350–351).

When the acharya removes the blindfold he shows the sadhaka the mantra's material form and gives him or her a new name, one of the Bhagavan's twelve murtis or of his weapons. In the case of a Brahmin male the name should end with *svami* (master), of a Kshatriya with *deva*, of a Vaisya with *vardhana* (thriving), and of a Shudra with *dasa* (servant, slave).[7] The

newly named sadhaka worships in the manner appropriate to his or her ritual class (*varna*), and the acharya performs further mantra rites on his disciple's behalf (*SS* 19.1–122; Smith 1975: 529–530).

The final rite of this portion and of the entire vibhava-diksha is the unction (*abhisheka*); it completes the diksha as a "birth." For this rite the sadhaka sits inside a specially built hall (*mandapa*), on a pedestal infused with the presence of the Plower as Adishesha the Snake. While the sadhaka utters the newly received root mantra, the acharya pours water over his head from a jar consecrated with Vishnu's presence (*vaishnava-kumbha*). The poured water transmits Vishnu's presence onto the sadhaka and signals that he or she is like a newborn cleansed of all defilement (*papa*) (Heesterman 1957: 157). The sadhaka may now use the root mantra in worship on his or her behalf (*svarthapuja*).

This infusion of Adishesha in the pedestal on which the sadhaka sits for the unction reveals that part two of the vibhava-diksha moves the sadhaka from identification with Brahma to identification with the Unobstructed as Brahma's source. The sadhaka's posture replicates the Unobstructed as he appears in the waters of Vasudeva's womb beyond directional space and chronological time (*BP* 10.89.47–57). When Brahma is awake in his body of spacetime the Unobstructed sits enthroned on the Plower as the snake Adishesha holding our perishing realm (*kshiti mandala*) on one of his thousand hoods. It has the size of a mustard seed (*BP* 5.25.2). The sadhaka's ocean of consciousness is no longer the ocean existing inside Brahma, but the ocean in which Brahma exists. The axe of nonclinging in the metaphor of the fig tree has achieved its goal at least momentarily, and unction fluids are poured over the sadhaka repeating the eight-syllable mantra to confirm the fact.

The sadhaka now has a status like that of the seer Nara ("man") and his acharya has a status like that of the seer Narayana. Nara is the material form of Vasudeva as a sadhaka disciple of himself in the material form of the seer named Narayana. God appears to become both guru and disciple in order to provide material forms to illustrate the meaning of the root mantra: "*Om*, I a human (*nara*) venerate him in whom I live, and move, and have my being (*narayana*)."

Nara venerates Narayana at his ashram at Badari, but throughout the kalpa the pair invisibly traverses Bharata to teach the discipline of the ego in favor of the atman, and to model the acharya-shishya relationship. Bhagavatas worship them together, and the very first words of the *Mahabharata* venerate them, for Narayana appears in its story as Krishna and Nara appears as Arjuna. The deva seer Narada resides at Badari with Narayana and Nara; and in their presence he teaches his disciple, Savarni, the Satvata System and the teachings of the seer Kapila to his mother Devahuti about samkhya and yoga (*BP* 5.19.9–15; 10.52.1–4; 3.25–32).

While the sadhaka is still wet from the unction, the acharya leads the "newborn" to the Bhagavan, most likely as icon (*archa*). The sadhaka performs

the appropriate worship (*puja*) with the mantras and rites previously mastered. After this the acharya dismisses devas present in the mandala and its equipment, and the sadhaka worships the acharya, rewards Brahmins and other guests, and eats a meal. The acharya may instruct the "newborn" in the meanings of the root mantra, as Nandivarman's acharya did at Sri Rangam. He taught the emperor for about two and three-quarters hours (seven nalikai), and Kalikanri described his instruction as a mother nursing her newborn child:

> Sitting there for seven nalikai,
> The breast filled with affection
> Oozed with sweet grace
> For the enduring Pallava ruler
>   (a rare man of true valor,
>   a patron of kings flaunting
>   tall glittering crowns);
> I your slave
> Know the richness of the mantra
> Spoken to him,
> I take refuge in the golden feet
> That measured the world,
> And I am saved by you
>   My Father at lovely Rangam graced by groves. (*PT* 5.8.9)

From this point on the sadhaka is committed to a lifelong sadhana that includes daily use of mudra, mandala, and mantra in worship. Each day he or she is to place the Bhagavan's protective presence on six places of the body, most visibly on the forehead between the eyebrows (*SS* 21.48–52a). Daily life is to center on devotion to fire, to guru, to mantra, to the religious system (*shastra*), and to its authorities. And in every act the sadhaka is to remember the acharya (*SS* 21.62; Smith 1975: 530–531).

The Sadhaka

Let us now consider the sadhaka who has received the vibhava-diksha and is a slave to Majesty united to Ajita as Sri Vishnu or Tirumal. His consciousness has been infused with mantras, and God churns it through sadhana to produce all the elements of his majestic life, framed at its beginning by its end (*kalakuta*) and at its end by its prosperous longevity (*amrita*). His identities as Indra of Men (*narendra*) and Man as Deva (*naradeva*) are now subsumed by his status as a *Shrimad-bhagavata*, a Slave of the Bhagavan Possessing Majesty.

He appears in the framing stories of Nrisimha and Hiryanakashipu as a majestic Bhagavata (Yudhishthira) facing death (Parikshit). The story of Hiryanakashipu depicts a drama within him, which will lead to his death and

another birth. Chronologically this story takes place prior to the Milk Ocean churning, and its place in the *Bhagavata Purana* before that story identifies it with the cleansing Man-lion Consecration (*nrisimha-diksha*). It is nevertheless depicted on the temple to illustrate the penultimate vyuha-diksha, because this sadhaka is qualified to perform worship to gain worldly pleasure (*bhoga*) for his self, like Hiryanakashipu. He understands samkhya's doctrine of perceptive consciousness (*purusha*) as distinct from matter (*prakriti*), and he knows the yoga to use to be as wealthy and self-sufficient as Brahma appears to be. At the same time, however, a delight in Krishna has been born in him through the consecration, and it is steadfastly committed to the yoga of the servant (*dasya-yoga*) like Prahlada. A mature discipline for gaining one's own pleasure (*bhoga*), and a young discipline for gaining another's pleasure (*dasa*), are irreconcilable realities now exisitng within the same sadhaka. The solution to their opposition is samkhya-yoga as it is taught by the seer Kapila in the *Bhagavata Purana*, because it does not end with bhoga nor with kaivalya or moksha, but with service at Vasudeva's feet (*BP* 3.25.32–44). This is the goal of the penultimate vyuha-diksha.

Man-lion in the Ocean of Milk: The Vyuha-diksha

Before Man-lion seized Hiryanakashipu, God's bala churned the sadhaka's ocean of consciousness infused with the milk of mantra through the sadhana of the vibhava-diksha. But through the sadhana of the next consecration, the vyuha-diksha, God's jnana is enthroned within his ocean of milkly consciousness as Man-lion. We know this because of "The Secret Teaching about Man-lion's Burning" (*Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishad*) of the *Atharva Veda* (Deussen 1980 2. 809–861).

The *Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishad* consists of two parts, the first or prior (*purva*) and the second or latter (*uttara*). Part one begins by telling us, "The Man-lion who rests in the milk-ocean [is] 'the highest step' meditated upon by the yogins" (Purva 1.5). Man-lion is the "King of Mantras" (*mantraraja*) resting on his throne within the sadhaka's milk-ocean consciousness. It comes from Agama rather than from Veda, and devas receive it when they go to the Master of Progeny seeking refuge from their fear of death in samsara. Any sadhaka may receive it and recite it, but its accompanying Vedic portions such as *Om* are restricted to the twice-born (Purva 1.3, 1.7). As Man-lion's sonic body, the mantra's audible utterance (*japa*) conveys a vision of God and in the Kali Yuga is the gate to liberation (Purva 1.5).

The mantra consists of four lines in the anushtubh meter; in Paul Deussen's translation it reads:

> The terrible, mighty, great, Vishnu,
> Burning in all the directions,

As Man-lion, fearful and gracious,
As the death of deaths, I adore him.
(Deussen 1980 2: 810).

The mantra may be drawn as a wheel mandala with *Om* at the center to denote Man-lion. It may be inscribed on a protective device (*yantra*) given by an acharya to a disciple to wear on the neck, arm, or hair-tuft. Its protective potency (*shakti*) is believed to be astounding. It produces fruits equivalent to: the purity of devas; release from all sins and samsara; the bondage of all devas, asuras, and poisons; the gain of the seven worlds from earth up to the cosmic shell; the enchantment of all beings; the offering of all sacrifices; the study of all revealed texts; and one hundred learned ascetics reciting the *Atharva Veda*. It confers the abode yogins meditate upon, which they gain and never lose (Purva 5; Deussen 1980 2: 829–833).

The Sadhana of the Vyuha-diksha

The vyuha-diksha inaugurates two sadhanas, which enable delight in Krishna to rule consciousness (*SS* 16.29a, 36b–37; Smith 1975: 526). The *Satvata-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama describes them. The first sadhana consists of rites entitled "Worship of the Formations in the Fourth State of Consciousness" (*turiyavyuha-samaradhana*). They employ mantras and materials to produce a wheel of colors and letters (*varnachakra*), which the sadhaka draws on a surface, placing letters of the Sanskrit script in the spaces between wheel's spokes, along the rim, and elsewhere.[8] The sadhaka uses the wheel to focus on the four formations in his deep-sleep consciousness (*sushupti-vyuha*) and to worship them with four mantras.[9]

During the second discipline he constructs mantras from the same wheel of colors and letters for further worship. First he creates the Mantra of the Pillar of Blazing Light (*vishakhayupa-mantra*) from twenty-four letters and uses it to address all four of Narayana's formations at once. He then uses four other mantras to address each formation individually, envisioning them as existing in his dreaming-sleep consciousness (*svapnavyuha*).[10]

Part two of the upanishad identifies the mantra *Om* at the mandala's center as Man-lion, and says *Om* is the subject of its entire teaching (Deussen 1980 2: 837–858). According to Paul Deussen, *Om* unifies the microcosmic atman and the macrocosmic *brahman*, and Man-lion embodies all three. Its concept of the atman is subtler than samkhya's separation of Self from matter in kaivalya. In Deussen's words, "[the atman] persists in full purity only in his supreme, sixteenth aspect as a completely passive subject of perception (*avikalpa*), while with his fifteen subordinate forms he projects into the world and conditions its reality, but . . . this whole reality of the world and his fifteen subordinate forms are nothing when looked at from the highest point of view.

The inner unity of Atman in all beings is thereby brought to view by the artistically executed interweaving of all forms with each other" (Deussen 1980 2: 835). Consciousness awake, dreaming, or in dreamless sleep participates in the deeper stage called the fourth (*turiya*). But the fourth itself divides into four. The "fourth of this fourth" (*turiyaturiya*) is the sixteenth and supreme aspect of the pure atman, completely true being without difference (*avikalpa*), pure perception whose only taste is of mental activity. It is not discovered through intellectual activity, however, only through conscious experience (*anubhava*).[11] This conscious experience of the fourth of the fourth results from the two sadhanas inaugurated by the vyuha-diksha.

The Sukshma-diksha

As the last of the three consecrations that Narada teaches in the *Satvata-samhita*, the sukshma-diksha or "Consecration to the Hidden," addresses the formations perceived in waking consciousness (*SS* 5–6; Smith 1975: 517–520). It moves the sadhaka's perception of God from dreaming sleep to the pereception of Narayana's four formations while awake (*jagratvyuha*). Akrura's underwater perception of Krishna and Balarama sitting in his chariot as Narayana sitting on Samkashana, and his long prayer, illustrate the hidden nature of this perception, as discussed in chapter 6. As Krishna told Arjuna, it is a waking up to a joy that culminates in "extinguishing in *brahman*" (*brahmanirvana*). "His pleasure within, his joy within, his light within, he with consciousness unified becomes *brahman* and approaches extinguishing in *brahman*. Seers in whom kalmasha is destroyed attain extinguishing in *brahman*: their doubts dispelled, with self-control, they take pleasure in friendliness toward all beings.[12] Extinguishing in *brahman* revolves on all sides of these yatis whose thoughts are controlled, who are unlinked from desire and anger, and who know the Self."[13]

This sadhana begins with an interior sacrifice (*antaryaga*), performed with faith (*shraddha*) and devotion (*bhakti*) and using the wheel. The sadhaka visually constructs the formations with their specific shapes and colors, and then dissolves them counterclockwise, from the Unobstructed back through the Pre-eminently Mighty to the Plower and finally to Vasudeva, Lord of the Moving Universe. This rite is called apyayayoga, "the unification of consciousness (*yoga*) by dissolving (*apyaya*)," or "dissolving into unity" (*SS* 5.21–26). The singular Vasudeva at the end is the singular Krishna depicted in Panel 10, for Kaliya's wives identify Krishna dancing on their husband as embodying all four formations. Balarama's intentional inactivity in the Kaliya episode matches this apyayayoga, because Govinda acts on his own.

After this interior sacrifice, the Sukshma-diksha prescribes an exterior sacrifice (*bahiryaga*) to the "fourfold atman" (*chaturatmya*). It takes two forms.

One is an elaborate puja focused on an icon in the Bhagavan's house (*bhagavadgriha*) (*SS* 6.1–131; Smith 1975: 518–519). The other is the worship of the four formations in three stages. The sadhaka first takes fire out of a single pit to establish four separate fires, one for each formation. He offers each vyuha the offerings appropriate to him in his own fire. The sadhaka then performs ancestral rites by selecting four Pancharatra Brahmins whom he visualizes as the formations. Finally, the sadhaka visualizes the formations as inside his self and sacrifices to them (*atmayaga*). After all of this, he prostrates at the feet of God in the Bhagavan's house and recites scriptures (*SS* 6.132–190; Smith 1975: 519–520).

Both forms of the exterior sacrifice (*bahiryaga*) correspond in the story to Krishna's emergence from the Yamana River pond dressed as if for puja. The Brahmins who come to receive gifts correspond to the four Brahmins the sadhaka worships as the four formations, for they, too, receive gifts. Yashoda with Krishna sitting on her lap corresponds to the sadhaka's worship of the formations inside himself. This last correspondence, however, requires a brief discussion of Yashoda and Nanda as they apply to the sadhaka.

According to the narrating Shuka, after Krishna emerged from the encounter with Kaliya, Yashoda of great excellence (*mahabhaga*), the sati who got back her lost child, embraced Krishna, placed him on her lap, and wept with joy. Yashoda represents the sadhaka's knowledge (*jnana*), the greatest excellence (*bhaga*) a soul (*jiva*) possesses. This knowledge appears as a woman of true being (*sati*) joyfully embracing Krishna as its object. Correspondingly, Nanda represents the power (*bala*) paired with it. But the soul's bhagas are limited in contrast to the bhagas of God. Nanda tries to go into the pool after Krishna disappears into Kaliya's coils, but God's bala, Balarama, restrains him (*BP* 10.16.22). Yashoda as the soul's jnana holds the bejeweled Krishna in her lap, but her knowledge remains defective, because Krishna is not her son (*BP* 10.17.17–18).

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Appendix 3: Prithu, the People's Indra

Prithu in the *Shatapatha Brahmana*

Just as the south-facing sequence of the "Path of the Southern Doctrine" begins with the sculpted panel of Prithu's sacrifice at the southwest corner of nirriti, the rajasuya ceremony begins with an oblation to Nirriti south of the sacrificial ground. Her oblation is made with a firebrand from the southern fire at a "self-produced hollow or cleft." The priest offers her the grains that fell to the ground during the preparation of sacrificial food for her complement named Anumati. Before Anumati can be enlisted on behalf of the rajasuya's sponsor, Nirriti must be satisfied: "For Nirriti is this (earth); whomsoever she seizes upon with evil, him she seizes upon with destruction (*nirriti*): hence whatever part of this (earth) is of the Nirriti nature, that he thereby propitiates; and thus Nirriti does not seize upon him, while being consecrated. And the reason why he offers in a self-produced hollow or cleft, is that that much of this (earth) is possessed with Nirriti" (*SB* 5.2.3.2).

After he pours Nirriti's oblations into the hole, the priest walks northward to the sacrificial ground without looking back. Now he offers Anumati the cake prepared for her on eight potsherds: "For Anumati is this (earth); and whosoever knows to do that work which he intends to do, for him indeed she approves (*anu-man*) thereof: hence it is her he thereby pleases, thinking, 'May I be consecrated, approved by that (genius of) approval!'" He offers the cake on eight potsherds because the gayatri meter consists of eight

syllables "and this earth is Gayatri" (*SB* 5.2.3.4–5). Anumati and Nirriti evoke Aditi and Diti, the respective mothers of devas and asuras. They share the the same father, the master of progeny named Kashyapa, the son of Marichi who was born of Brahma's mental activity (*manas*).[1] Nirriti's domain beneath the surface of the earth points down to the asuras dwelling in the dark waters under the earth, and Anumati's domain above it points up to the devas dwelling in bright heaven above.

Prithu's oblations appear later in the rajasuya on the first day of Chaitra. The sacrificer (*yajamana*) is to be born an Indra of People from the midday soma sacrifice. This sacrifice is understood to be Prajapati, the Master of Progeny; the sponsor is consecrated in the middle of this ceremony and is therefore understood to be born from Prajapati's center or navel. Prithu's offerings are called partha oblations and enclose this central rite in the following manner.

The Partha Oblations

There are twelve of these partha oblations because there are twelve months in the year. Six are made before and six are made after the consecration (*diksha*) in order for the raja to be born from the year's navel. The adhvaryu priest of the *Sama Veda* begins by spreading a tiger skin in front of the hearth for Mitra-Varuna; Mitra is True Being (*satya*) and Varuna is Master of Order or Law (*dharmapati*) (*SB* 5.3.3.8–9). After he transmits the tiger's beauty to the sponsor, he begins the oblations that Prithu Son of Vena (*prithin vainya*) offered in his own rajasuya:

> Now Prithu Vainya was consecrated first of men. He desired that he might appropriate to himself all food. They offered up for him those (oblations), and he appropriated to himself all the food here on earth. They would even call forest beasts to him, saying, "come hither thou (beasts) so and so, the king wants to cook thee!" Thus he appropriated all food here on earth; and verily he appropriates to himself all food for whom that knows this those (oblations) are offered [sic]. (*SB* 5.3.5.4)

The newly born raja is now equipped for his role. The priest consecrates a bow for him as Indra's Vritra-killer and identifies the sponsor's two arms that will hold it as Mitra and Varuna. He hands him the bow with the prayer "May he slay Vritra by thee" and by Vritra denotes the raja's "spiteful enemy." Finally he hands him three arrows to protect him in all quarters. The priest announces that the raja is now consecrated, first to Prajapati and then to the assembled Agni (the priesthood), Indra (the nobility), Mitra and Varuna (the out-breathing and in-breathing), Pushan (the cattle), heaven and earth the "all

propitious," and "Aditi, of wide shelter." Their approval completes the consecration (*SB* 5.3.5.29–37).

The second set of six partha oblations now "sprinkle" this consecrated raja with vigor or might. The priest offers them sequentially to Indra, to the roar, to the noise, to Amsha, to Bhaga, and to Aryaman.

The *Shatapatha Brahmana* comments on the meaning of this arrangement of these two sets of six partha oblations, one before and one after the birth and diksha. Brihaspati ends the first set and Indra begins the second. Translated into visual terms, this means that Brihaspati is to the raja's right and Indra is to his left. He is enclosed by vigor's two modes, priestly dignity (*brahma*) on his right side and might (*kshatra*) on his left side (*SB* 5.3.5.7).

Goddess Earth as Cow

The *Shatapatha Brahmana*'s story of Prithu and his desire for food reveals itself in Maitreya's telling as Prithu's desire for food for the sake of his realm, because after his rajasuya Prithu's realm does not produce. Even though Goddess Earth, who floats like a raft on the waters of the ocean (*BP* 4.15.43–16.6), receives her share (*bhaga*) of offerings in his sacrifices, she yields nothing in return, and Prithu's subjects are starving. When Prithu threatens to shoot her, Goddess Earth flees in the form of a cow. He relentlessly pursues her through all realms beneath the pole star until finally she gives up.

Goddess Earth takes refuge in Prithu as a female who seeks dharma as protection, but Prithu's response is stern. He tells her that she has no right to keep seeds of plants that are not perennial (*oshadhi*) to herself because Brahma created them as food for people. It doesn't matter that she is female, because "a king may righteously kill anyone who is too self-regarding, perverse, and merciless to living creatures." He threatens to cut her to bits and sustain his subjects with only water by means of his yoga powers (*BP* 4.17.26–27).

Goddess Earth, who knows that Prithu is the Bhagavan and as Boar rescued her from Rasatala, does not understand why he is willing to kill her (*BP* 4.17.29–36). She explains that she saw that unrestrained people were eating the oshadhi plants that Brahma had created to produce food for the rites of sacrifice and that thieves were taking over so she decided to keep the seeds to herself. But now that such misrule is gone she is willing to give milk in whatever form it is desired (*kamananurupam*). All Prithu needs to do is provide the required calf for whom she will pour out her milk, a pot to hold it, and a milker. She also suggests that he level her so that rainwater will spread everywhere and be available after the rainy season (*BP* 4.18.1–11).

Prithu takes Goddess Earth's advice. He begins by using Svayambhu Manu as his calf and his own palm as a pot. He milks all oshadhi plants from

Goddess Earth as Cow, which is all he wants. Everyone else follows his example. The seers take the deva acharya, Brihaspati, as their calf and milk out the Veda and other scriptures into the senses (*indriya*) as pot. Devas take Indra as their calf and milk soma into a golden vessel. Asuras take Prahlada as their calf and milk liquor and beer (*surasava*) into an iron vessel. And so it goes, until all categories of beings have the substances that nurture their natures (*BP* 4.18.12–27). Goddess Earth is now a wondrous desire-fulfilling cow and Prithu adopts her as his daughter. He splits the mountains with the end of his bow, levels his adopted daughter, and builds on her the villages, towns, and cities of civilization (*BP* 4.18.28–32).

Interpretation

This story of Goddess Earth as wish-fulfilling cow embeds two salient ideas about human society during Pallava rule. The first derives from Goddess Earth as exemplary Cow. The cow licking her calf while she is milked is an intimate image in Vedic household life, because each day the householder is to milk his cow, mix in water, and pour the mixture as an oblation into his kitchen fire to nourish devas and sustain the world.[2] This story identifies his cow with Goddess Earth's motherly affection (*vatsalya*) pouring out nourishment to sustain the universe by providing these daily oblations. Sculptors replicated this scene as the centerpiece of the seventh-century cave-temple at Mamallapuram where Krishna in Gokula holds the mountain Govardhana against Indra's dark rains (Lockwood 1993: 124–129).

Given this first idea, people who kill or eat cattle outside of Vedic sacrifices may be thought of as slaying or cannibalizing the representative of Goddess Earth and her vatsalya.[3] People who in this way kill and eat their own "mother" are categorically alien to civilization; the act itself reveals the defilement (*kalmasha*) of a naishada nature.

The second idea derives from Prithu's first and only act of milking Goddess Earth: he wants oshadhi, annual plants that die after ripening. The cultivation of such annuals, especially of rice, wheat, and barley, provides food or annam, and annam is the basis of Vedic rule and its civilization. This story attributes the source of annam to the properly engendered raja, because this is all that Prithu milked out. This means that cultivators are the raja's means of feeding his realm and share with him characteristics that distinguish them from naishadas. Both cultivator and king are intimately related to Goddess Earth and to the deva, asura, and rakshasa powers involved in fertility; both provide annam as the foundation of civilization; and both dwell in properly bounded settlements (*grama, ur*). If either ever eats cows (for example during the rajasuya), he does so because a Vedic sacrifice requires it. Who does or does not kill cattle or eat beef outside of a Vedic sacrifice is a matter charged with

great significance in a society that accepts these Vedic ideas, because it reveals who is civilized and who is alien.

Prithu's Rule as the Indra of People

Prithu is now fully established on earth as the Indra of People; the difference between him and the Indra of devas in heaven is merely one horse sacrifice out of a hundred. He resides between the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers, but exercises his rod of discipline (*danda*) over everyone on earth's seven concentric continents. Except for the clan (*kula*) of Brahmins and those who belong to the lineage of the Unfallen (*acyutagotratah*) (*BP* 4.21.12), he is authorized to punish everyone, including pakhandas.

One day in the midst of a sacrificial ceremony (*sattra*), Prithu addresses the assembled devas and seers on the nature of righteous rule and the Vedic life (*BP* 4.21.8–44). The Master of Sacrifice (*yajnapati*), he says, manifests himself as the sacrifice and everything belonging to it. He holds the mace and dispenses karmic fruits (*BP* 4.22.27–29, 34–35). This Master of Sacrifice receives oblations through the mouth of Fire, but is more satisfied with oblations poured into the mouths of Brahmins established in forbearance (*titiksha*), austerity (*tapas*), and knowledge (*vidya*), who preserve Veda in their memories (*BP* 4.21.40–42). Serving the Yajnapati's feet means supporting and associating with such Brahmins; it purifies consciousness and leads to release from death and birth (*BP* 4.21.31–44).

Now the four Kumara sons of Brahma arrive. Sanatkumara delivers a lecture on Bhagavata Dharma and its ideal of the "man of true being" (*sant*) relevant to Prithu as a householder king. "To overcome thick darkness (*tamastivra*)," Sanatkumara concludes, "take refuge in Bhagavat Hari," and he and his brothers leave (*BP* 4.22.17–40, esp. 34). This lecture enables Prithu to perceive the *brahman* beyond the threads of matter, and from then on, even while remaining a householder, he is a sant absorbed in the knowledge of the atman (*BP* 4.22.49–63). He formally relinquishes the fruits of all his intentional acts (*karma*) as ruler, reigns perfectly with no possessive sense of "This is mine" (*mamaka*), and resides in the midst of a wealth he does not consider his. Prithu and Archi beget five sons. Nonattached action does not exclude sexual activity and its pleasures, but uses them instrumentally as their sovereign.

When Prithu eventually completes his work of establishing civilization, he renounces the householder life and goes with Archi to the forest to practice tapas. They end their lives there in a way highly approved by forest dwelling ascetics (*vaikhanasa*).[4] Prithu worships Krishna, performs severe tapas, retains his semen within himself (*urdhvareta*), masters breath control (*pranayama*), and meditates on the Bhagavan just as Sanatkumara had taught

him. At last, when he is prepared to abandon his body, he presses his heel to close his anus. He then raises the wind (*vayu*) embodying his mind through the wheels (*chakra*) of his subtle body. He moves it from the muladhara chakra near his anus to the chakras at his navel, his heart, his throat, and his brow. Finally he drives it to the brahmarandhra chakra at the top of his head (following Tagare 1976–1979 2: 565 interpreting 4.23.14–16).

Prithu no longer possesses longing (*nihsprihah*). This allows his material subtle body to merge into the body of spacetime and his mental activity (*manas*) to pass beyond the limits of embodiment altogether (*BP* 4.23.14–15). All that remains is his gross physical body as corpse. When Atri cremates it she performs the rites of the sati, enters the pyre, and through its burning fire joins her husband (*BP* 4.24.19–39). From beginning to end, these portions of Sri Vishnu provide the paradigm for all Bhagavata rulers.

Interpretation: Limits to the People's Indra

Indra's name Yajna and Vishnu's identity as Master of Yajna suggest that the story has to do with the proper understanding of the fire sacrifice (*yajna*). It assumes the idea taught in the Dwarf and Bali story, that Hari is the recipient of all offerings, and it assumes the idea found in the horse sacrifice, that the horse substitutes for its sponsor (*yajamana*). The story explores the idea that a human king is an Indra by making Indra the victim to replace the missing horse, which itself is a substitute for the human sponsor. No one disagrees with the idea of offering the deva king as the victim; only when Brahma reveals that this particular Indra is an amsha of Vishnu do they give up the idea. But Prithu too, is an amsha of Vishnu. The patron, the horse, and Indra thus are the same nature in different shapes and these shapes are in principle interchangeable. But, in this case at least, the story argues against acting on this interchangeability.

This story captures a problem Veda faces. Vedic fire sacrifices require victims, but killing animals, especially in large numbers, generates sympathy for pakhanda anti-Veda teachings; the shramana religions denounce injury to life (*himsa*), whether during sacrifice or not. Nevertheless, Indra plays a role in shramana lore and ritual as patron of their dharmas, and the story takes this into account.[5] It calls Indra Fire Sacrifice and locates the origin of anti-Veda pakhandas in his opposition to a horse sacrifice during the rule of the paradigmatic raja. Brahma emphasizes this origin when he argues that this particular Indra is an amsha of Vishnu and cannot be used as a victim, and then argues that if anyone tries, he will only generate more pakhanda guises.

This story explains three things about the pakhandas, known also as pasandas. First, they originate in Vishnu through his portion in the form of the Indra named Yajna. Second, they originate in acts of delusion designed to protect the disrupter of a Vedic sacrifice. Third, they identify the motivation for

this disruption not as compassion for living beings but rather as a jealous protection of royal status from a rival. Indra in heaven does not want Prithu on earth to become his equal and generates pakhanda guises to confuse the man chasing him.

One solution to disagreement over killing animals is to keep the sacrificial rites, but to replace their animal victims with vegetables and grains. This story of Prithu does not offer this solution and implies that animal victims are normative. But the Pancharatra Agama normally avoids animal victims. No explanation for this change appears in the *Bhagavata Purana* as far as I can tell, but there is a Pancharatra explanation in the *Mahabharata*.

King Vasu Uparichara

This explanation appears in an ancient legend (*itihasa puratana*) told by Bhishma as part of the Pancharatra Narayaniya portion of the Shanti Parvan in the *Mahabharata*.[6] It is about Vasu Uparichara, a king whose name encapsulates a story that plays with the words of his name. *Vasu* has three meanings: "beneficence or wealth"; a set of beneficent devas called Vasu;[7] and a "dwelling" or a "dweller." *Uparichara* means "he walks above."

Vasu Uparichara is an emperor (*adhipati*) ruling during the Krita Yuga and devoted to Narayana Hari. The Angirasa Brihaspati is his purohita and teaches him the *Satvata Shastra*, which is "the eternal womb of dharma" (*Mbh* 12.322.50; 323.3). Seven Seers known as the Chitrasikhandins had composed it under the inspiration of Goddess Sarasvati, and Narayana authorized it.[8] Vasu worships exclusively through a Satvata rite (*satvata vidhi*) taught by Surya the Sun, and he injures no living being (*Mbh* 12.322.19). He is a bhakta completely devoted to Janardana the God of devas, and regards everything that is his as given by Narayana and offers it all to him in return. The *Satvata Shastra* guides his rule and he patronizes great men adept in Pancharatra rituals.

One day Vasu Uparichara sponsors a horse sacrifice and orders that no animals shall be slain and offered; forest products shall replace them. Devas appear to receive their shares, and all but Hari are visible to the participants; but Hari is so pleased with Vasu that He allows him alone to see Him. This angers Brihaspati, but Vasu and others remind him that no one has to power (*shakti*) to see God, the sight of Him is his grace (*prasada*) (*Mbh* 12.323.17–18). Vasu Uparichara rules so perfectly after this that his mind and body are never defiled. When he dies he goes to heaven, and this is why he walks above (*uparichara*).

One day in heaven devas discuss with seers of the Veda the meaning of the word *aja* in the mantras prescribing sacrificial offerings (*Mbh* 12.324). Devas receive these offerings, and they argue that *aja* means a goat. The seers of Veda disagree and say *aja* means the seeds of vegetables. How can it be dharma to slaughter animals, especially in this Krita Yuga? At this point, King Vasu

Uparichara and his retinue come into view, and they decide to let this great and wise ruler render an opinion. "Should one sacrifice with a goat or with herbs and plants?" they ask. The king wants to know what the seers think, and they say grain should be used as the offering, but the devas think it should be a goat. Despite the fact that while ruling on earth Vasu practiced ahimsa and prohibited animals in his own horse sacrifice, he sides with the devas and says he thinks animals should be used. This enrages the seers, and they curse him: He shall lose his ability to fly through space and shall fall deep into the earth.

Immediately Vasu falls from space, gains an earthly body, and plunges into a deep pit. He is no longer uparichara, walking above, but a vasu dweller on earth with a pit as his vasu dwelling. The devas know, of course, that the king is suffering because of them and decide to free him from the curse. In order to sustain him in the vasu pit, they order that the sacrificial libation of ghee called "stream of vasu" (*vasodhara*) fall into the pit to nourish him, which now adds beneficence and wealth to the meanings of *vasu*.

The *Shatapatha Brahmana* explains this as the nourishment of the sponsor of a sacrifice. The uninterrupted sequence of 401 vasodhara libations is offered to Agni after he has been established in the Agnichayana liturgy as vasu or beneficent. When devas perform this liturgy, they offer vasu Agni this shower (*dhara*) to please him, and the patron of the sacrifice (*yajamana*) does the same through the priests. These vasu streams are Vasu Agni's unction (*abhisheka*); they pour over him to satisfy all his wishes and the wishes of the sponsor (*SB* 9.3.2.1).

This information applied to the legend reveals that the devas order King Vasu Uparichara dwelling in the vasu pit to be treated as the sponsor of an agnichayana; he is to receive all he wants from the streams of wealth poured out as ghee for the Vasu Agni. These streams therefore enable Vasu, even while dwelling in the pit, faithfully to perform the five sacrifices (*panchayajna*) prescribed by the Pancharatra Agama for the five portions of the day (*panchakala*). All of his self-disciplined worship of no one else pleases the Bhagavan Vishnu, and he sends Garuda to fetch him. Garuda flies into the pit and brings Vasu out. After Vasu abandons his earthly body, Garuda carries him into space and into the world of *brahman* (*brahmaloka*).[9]

Brahmins as "Fires" for Oblations

In his lecture to his people, Prithu says that the Master of Sacrifice receives oblations through the mouth of Fire, but is more satisfied with oblations poured into the mouths of Brahmins who are established in forbearance (*titiksha*), austerity (*tapas*), and knowledge (*vidya*), and preserve Veda in their memories (*BP* 4.21.40–42). Serving the Yajnapati's feet, he explains, means

supporting and associating with such Brahmins; it purifies consciousness and leads to release from death and birth (*BP* 4.21.31–44).

This explanation of what it means for a Bhagavata householder to give alms to a proper Bhagavata Brahmin resembles the views held by householder patrons of the pakhanda shramanas. Brahmins and shramanas are analogous modes of sacred fire. Krishna teaches the same doctrine to Arjuna from the Bhagavata perspective (*BG* 17.20–22; 23–28). To feed a proper Brahmin is to make a sacrificial oblation, because, as Prithu observes, the proper Brahmin contains Veda in his memory; feeding him is therefore the same as feeding Veda. Nothing results from the "untrue" feeding of deluded shramana monks and nuns by other householders, but giving alms to Bhagavata Brahmins is "true" feeding and purifies the one who gives.

There are, of course, pakhanda counters to this Bhagavata interpretation. Aryasura tells the jataka of the Bodhisattva when he was king of Kosala. He tells his queen that in his previous life he was a very poor workman living in Kosala. One day he was about to set off for a job and he saw four obviously pure bhikshus begging for alms. He devoutly offered them a simple dumpling in his house, and from that little seed he planted then grew this royal rule he now enjoys in the palace. His queen has a similar memory of a previous life. She was a servant and one day respectfully offered a portion of food to a bhikshu free of passion. Because of that offering she gained this life with him as her husband. As the bhikshu told her, "No service rendered to holy men is neglibile" (Aryasura in Khoroche 1989: 18–21).

The Pakhanda Imposters

Maitreya explains to Vidura that the word *pakhanda* (or *pasanda*) is from *papa-khanda*, and means that the guises Indra generated are fragments of sin (*papasya khandani*); each fragment is a body (*linga khanda*) (*BP* 4.19.22 and 24–25). The sin they embody is Yajna Indra's asura-like sin of disrupting the Vedic sacrifice, and the story tells us that they have existed from the beginning of civilization. Maitreya specifies the naked and the red-robed shramanas "and others." They fool people of poor understanding, he explains, because they attractively teach their doctrines as dharma, which is why imposter bodies of sinful adharma flourish at dharma's expense.

Krishna teaches Arjuna about these imposters in the *Bhagavad-gita*. They are foolish people who, unlike the wise, do not acknowledge his identity as the Bhagavan:

> Fools scorn me, who has assumed a human body,
> Not knowing my transcendent being as supreme ruler
>   of living beings.

> They desire in vain, they act in vain, they perceive
> wisdom in vain,
> And they cling to Mohini of rakshasa and asura matter,
> While those of great self, son of Pritha, cling to
> matter of devas
> And worship with minds nowhere else, knowing the imperishable
> beginning of all living beings. (*BG* 9.11–13)

"Mohini of rakshasa and asura matter" refers in the narrative to the courtesan (*veshyastri*) guise Vishnu assumes to retrieve amrita from asuras; she appears in the corner Panel S6 on the bottom floor.[10] Interpreted more abstractly as "rakshasa and asura matter that deludes," she may be understood to refer to Vishnu's pakhanda guises generated at civilization's beginning. The people who cling to these delusive material shapes are shramanas and their householder patrons. Bhagavatas are not deluded, of course, and cling instead to the pure matter of Krishna's human body.

Krishna tells Arjuna more about these pakhandas and their patrons when he instructs him about people who have faith and perform sacrifices, but have rejected the ordinances of the Bhagavata system (*BG* 17.1). He categorizes these people of rival religions according to whether their faith and behavior is pure (*sattva*), passionate (*rajas*), or dark (*tamas*). In each case, pakhandas and their patrons fall in the category of darkness (*BG* 17.4–6).

Krishna first explains that their deluded faith leads them to sacrifice "to the dead and to assemblies of the living." Through unauthorized severe tapas, these people "of asura conviction" (*asura-nishchayan*) torment the clusters of living beings that dwell in their gross bodies; and they torment "Me too," he says, "I who stand inside the body." Krishna apparently has shramana religions in mind. "Sacrifice to the dead" describes householder worship at the funeral mounds for shramana heroes called stupas; sacrifice to "assemblies of the living" describes the alms householders give to shramanas when they assemble twice monthly, or during the monsoon season, or daily for alms. Some shramanas, of course, take vows of extreme tapas (as Shakyamuni will do for six years), and injure the embodied souls (*jivas*) dwelling in their bodies, including Krishna, who is their own atman.

Krishna goes on to teach Arjuna about these other religions' food, sacrifice, ascetic practice, and gifts (*BG* 17.7–22). People of deluded faith live on food unfit for Vedic sacrifice, he explains. It is stale, without taste, rotten, and decayed (*BG* 17.10). This describes a shramana discipline of subsisting on alms (*bhiksha*).

Because they do not esteem faith (*sraddha*) in Veda, Krishna says, they perform sacrifices outside the proper ordinances, do not distribute food to Brahmins, do not use proper mantras, and do not give dakshina to priests to

conclude sacrifices and receive their merit (*BG* 17.13). This describes householder offerings of alms to bhikshus as if they are fires to receive oblations, and the puja they perform at stupas and shrines.

Their tapas, he continues, is based on foolish theories, so they torture themselves and destroy others (*BG* 17.19). This describes disciplines followed in varying degrees of severity by shramanas and by their more pious householder followers.

Krishna concludes with their rites of giving (*dana*). They are performed untruly (*asatkrita*) and are not worthy of respect, he says, because they give dana at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and to unworthy recipients (*BG* 17.22). Any dana given by householders or shramanas who act without faith in Veda is fruitless.

One example of the shramana discipline Krishna may have had in mind appeared around 200 CE in the Buddhist Sanskrit community of Mathura. The "Legend of Ashoka" (*ashokavadana*) depicts King Ashoka's attempt to dissuade his brother, Vitashoka, from his decision to become a sramana (in John Strong's translation): "Vitashoka, forego this resolution! The ascetic life results in a worsening of one's appearance; your garments will be rags from the dust-heap, and your cloak something that was thrown out by a servant; your food will consist of alms collected from strangers; your bed and your seat will be a layer of grass and a pile of leaves at the foot of a tree. When you are sick, food will not be easy to obtain, and urine will be your medicine" (Strong 1983: 227).

In Bhagavata terms, the Buddhists in second-century Mathura testify to the Bhagavan's skillful use of "rakshasa and asura matter that deludes" to protect the Vedic basis of royal rule. Krishna teaches Arjuna near the end of the Dvapara Yuga of our seventh Manu Term, but he describes the pakhanda religions descending from the imposters Vishnu produced during Prithu's rule in the Krita Yuga of the first Manu Term. The Shakyamuni Buddha has not yet appeared, for as we recall from Akrura's prayer in the pool of Yamuna River water, Narayana as "the pure Buddha who deludes the Daityas and Danavas" will appear only after the Kali Yuga has begun (*BP* 10.40.22). Mathura's Buddhists will result from his appearance; they will be householders and shramanas deluded by Vishnu through his pakhanda guise as the Shakyamuni Buddha.

These pakhandas present the Bhagavata ruler with a subtle problem of policy. Prithu's royal dharma does not include injury (*himsa*) of other people and requires that he regard all the people in his realm as equivalent (*sama samana*), whether they are superior, mediocre, or common (*BP* 4.20.3,13). Equivalent or equal regard, however, does not mean eliminating social distinctions between them—for some are superior, some are mediocre, and some are common—but means treating them equally while preserving their

differences. Equal punishment for the same crime does not mean that each criminal receives the same punishment, but that each receives a punishment matching his or her superior, mediocre, or common status.

In the case of these pakhandas, who do not recognize Veda as the basis of his rule, the Bhagavata king must be careful to distinguish between the Buddhas and the red-robed bhikshus who follow them, between the tirthankaras and their naked or white-clad shramanas, and between Shiva and his shramanas wearing bones and carrying the khatvanga. In each case, the former is Vishnu as deluder, and the latter are the asura-like people he deludes. He worships the former and protects his realm from the latter, because, as the *Laws of Manu* say, people who persist in pakhanda doctrine will undermine his rule, just as those who gamble with dice and bet with animals do. He should banish all three together with traveling bards, playboys, men who persist in wrongdoing, and bootleggers; they are all thieves in disguise who cheat his good subjects (*Manu* 9.221–226). Like the cat and the heron, the pakhanda cannot be trusted; and like an alien Naishada entering town, a pakhanda brings disorder into civilized society.

Interpretation: Craving as Society's Base

Craving (*trishna*) and desire (*kama*) underlie Prithu's story as the first and exemplary People's Indra. The corpse of Excessive Desire is the source of civilization and of the disorder it rejects. The uncivilized forest peoples churned from his genital region share the lustful nature of asuras, who similarly emerge from the eager desire (*lolupa*) of Brahma's lap (*BP* 3.20.23–27). In contrast, Prithu and Archi churned from his arms to be the powerful Kshatriya founders of civilization share in Vishnu's deva nature as protector of dharma. Human society is made up of civilized and uncivilized people churned from the same corpse of inordinate desire born from death through a faulty fire sacrifice. Only the rod (*danda*) of dharma wielded by the raja—properly engendered an Indra of People by Veda—can control the self-centered and power-hungry craving from which all people emerge.

Yet Prithu's efforts as a people's Indra to become equal to a devas' Indra reveals craving's subtle power even within this most ideal of rulers. The pakhandas depict it openly. The Buddhist, Jaina, and other sramanas wandering throughout the land embody the sin of rulers who misuse Veda for their own aggrandizement. Although they are civilized subjects, these men and women have asura natures, which is why they respond eagerly to the Bhagavan's pakhanda guises and abandon Veda. But this foolishness weakens the potency of their dark nature, for by abandoning Veda they give up the very means by which they can discipline their inordinate desire. They teach a dharma they believe will abolish trishna, but by destroying Vedic society it will only unleash it.

Prithu provides the ideal strategy for the Bhagavata ruler. He rules as a slave of Krishna and sees the atman in all things. He has no sense of "This is mine," does not think the realm belongs to him, and treats everyone "equally." He venerates Vishnu's pakhanda guises as a buddha or a tirthankara, but keeps an eye on their shramana followers. He takes care to sustain the Vedic basis of his rule by keeping firm the boundaries between pakhanda ideas and systems and the ideas and systems of Veda and its Agamas.

Appendix 4: Mantras in The *Jayakhya-samhita*

In the *Jayakhya-samhita*, Hari explains to Narada that the reason portions of him in sonic bodies of vowels and consonants may be used to attain emancipation and worldly enjoyment is because the virya of his own unified consciousness operates their mantra shapes. Mantras intended for emancipation are of his shape having no parts (*nishkala*), while those intended for worldly success are of his shape having parts (*sakala*) (*JS* 4.30–33; Smith 1975: 116). Hari also tells him that mantras employed under the guidance of a guru in the practice of yoga will produce worldly success and emancipation, but leaves the topic of yoga for the final chapter (*JS* 5.1–10). Mantras employed during ceremonial performance (*kriya*) are of greater relevance to most people, and he explains them with the metaphor of a nursing mother of a newborn: "And another means gives success by means of mantras with 'mantra breasts.' When employed using mudra and other instruments they give birth to samadhis born from the heart. All mantras likewise uttered during ceremonies by sadhakas who are truly good possess supreme power [over] myriads of thousands of obstacles" (*JS* 5.31–32; my translation).

Hari then states the value of all of this to kingship: "Maya's shape roots out streams of obstacles by means of mantras and the other [instruments], and subdues whatever opposing king is near at hand. He who knows that mantras and the other [instruments] always give rapid and supreme success in attacking a king, O vipra [Narada], abides in me as the final refuge" (*JS* 5.35–36; my translation).

Hari teaches Narada about sadhanas that use mantras for the sake of mukti. He begins with mantras that relate to Vasudeva's shape

without parts (*nishkala*). He explains in chapter six that they are to be generated from a mandala drawn on clean sand in a pure spot. This mandala is a wheel with eight spokes and *Om* in the center, and on it all letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are to be written. These letters are to be imagined as devas and worshiped mentally with mantras generated from the mandala.

Sanjukta Gupta explains that the sadhaka learns that this wheel of forty-nine letters (*varna chakra*) is a closed circuit expressing Vasudeva's emanation and resorption through Shakti as speech. Both of these processes take place through the sequence of formations, and he learns to identitfy them with states of his own consciousness. The Plower corresponds to his deep sleep, the Pre-eminently Mighty corresponds to his dreaming, and the Unobstructed corresponds to his waking. He begins with manifestaion and ends with resorption. Because all four formations appear in each of these three stages, there are four modes of Plower, Pre-eminently Mighty, and Unobstructed to worship for a total of twelve devas of this subtle stage of pure creation.

Moreover, the Unobstructed is consciousness in the gross stage of pure creation and is all three of its modes as deep sleep, dreaming, and waking. These modes are embodied as the set of thirty-eight devas called vibhava. They are limited in sovereignty, but each manifests Shakti. Meanwhile Vasudeva remains transcendent to all this as the "fourth" (*turya* or *turiya*), consciousness beyond deep sleep. Sanjukta Gupta says that the Unobstructed asleep on the Snake in the primordial water that is maya shakti corresponds to this "fourth," and he is depicted inside this sanctum. But "beyond the fourth" (*turyatita*) is the ever-manifest para Vasudeva, and he is represented by vyuha Vasudeva depicted in the sanctum below (Gupta 1992: 180, 184, 188–190).

The following nine chapters (chs. 7–15) prescribe mantras used in poured oblations (*homa*) and offerings (*yaga*), and devas of these mantras are to be seen in the sadhaka's imagination through the practice of visualization (*dhyana*). Three chapters (chs. 16–18) then describe consecration (*diksha*) to mantras; its liturgy resembles that of the *Satvata-samhita*. It takes twelve years to attain mastery of mantra, Hari tells Narada in the next chapter (ch. 19), but after only ten years the disciple will experience and know amazing things (*JS* 19.33; Smith 1975: 123).

The next two chapters (chs. 20–21) introduce worship of Vasudeva's shape with parts (*sakala*), also for the sake of emancipation. Hari tells Narada how to make an icon (*bimba*), how to build housing for it, and how to perform ceremonies to establish Vasudeva's substance (*tattvam*) in it by means of mantras. This makes it an "icon made of mantra" (*JS* 20.334–337; Smith 1975: 124). Vasudeva's sonic amsha now resides in this drawn, painted, or sculpted body made of gross physical matter to receive the rites of puja. These icons enable the majority of sadhakas to visualize mantra devas easily, although with less satisfying results.

In the next chapter (ch. 22), Hari describes the characteristics of Vaishnavas who are qualified to perform the yagas and pujas discussed above. He also prescribes the rites they are to perform during a day constituted of five parts (*panchakala*). The first of these, called abhigamana, are cleansing preparations during the brahmamuhurta before sunrise. The second rites, called upadana, gather materials for worship after sunrise. The third rites, called ijya, consitute the midday sacrifice; this may include pashu or animals, but normally does not (for the pashu offering, see *JS* 20.77). The fourth rite, called svadhyaya, is study after the main meal of the day. And the fifth rite, called yoga, is performed in the night.[1]

The next three chapters appear to conclude all of the above as a set, because two (chs. 23–24) discuss rites for the dead and one (ch. 25) discusses rites of purification (*prayaschitta*). But Narada is not satisfied. "You you have told me about consecration (*diksha*) to the path of emancipation (*muktimarga*)," he says to Hari, "please tell me now about the path to enjoyment (*bhuktimarga*)" (*JS* 26.1). Narada knows that the muktimarga may also lead to bhoga, so he must want to know about the marga that leads exclusively to bhoga. This leads Hari to spend six chapters (chs. 26–32) teaching Narada these mantra sadhanas. They employ mandalas and yantras and require specific sitting postures (*asana*), hand gestures (*mudra*), placement of devas on the body (*nyasa*), and puja implements such as incense and bells.

Hari begins (in ch. 26) with the sadhana of the root mantra (*mula mantra*), whose syllables he does not give. He says that if this "king of mantras" (*mantraraja*) is properly used it will bestow astounding powers; in H. Daniel Smith's paraphrase, they include gaining control of the supernatural order, making poisons ineffective, bringing others to submission, and disposing of others or making them do as one desires (Smith 1975: 127).

Hari then teaches the mantras of Shakti (in ch. 27). They are the Lakshmi mantra, the kirti mantra, the Jaya mantra, and the Maya mantra. The first, of course, invokes Goddess Lakshmi regarding majestic wealth (*shri*). The second, the kirti mantra, brings fame (*kirti*) (*JS* 27.60, 63). The third mantra addresses Goddess Jaya (victory). Hari says that she is Narayana himself and that her rites produce protectors in this world for one's self and for others (*JS* 27.29, 109, 119–120). The fourth mantra addresses Goddess Maya, whose rites fulfill wishes and bestow enjoyments for one's self and others (*JS* 27.142, 150, 185, 204).

In the next chapter (ch. 28), Hari turns to mantras for the limbs of the body (*anga mantra*), and in the following (ch. 29) to mantras of the mouth (*vaktra mantra*). These last are for Man-lion, Kapila, and Boar. In the next chapter (ch. 30) he prescribes mantras for his accoutrements; they are the Kaushtubha gem, the lotus, the conch, the wheel, the mace, the mount Garuda, the rope, and the elephant hook. In the penultimate of these bhuktimarga chapters (ch. 32), Hari prescribes mantras for Satya, for the vyuhas

Vasudeva, Samkarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and for the "seven syllables."

Hari's concluding chapter of this set (ch. 32) prescribes mantra sadhanas that will ensure that everything taught up to now suceeds. He first teaches Narada the mantra of Ganesha as Ruler of Obstacles, and then the mantra and yantra of the Ruler of Speech, the Goddess who gives success to all aspirations (*JS* 32.62). Hari's final chapter (ch. 33) is about yoga.

Appendix 5: *Periya Tirumoli* 2.9

திருப்பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம்

சொல்லு வன்சொற்பொருள்தான் அவை ஆய்
 சுவை ஊறு ஒலி நாற்றமும் தோற்றமும் ஆய்
நல் அரன் நான்முகன் நாரணனுக்கு
 இடம்தான் தடம் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
பல்லவன் வில்லவன் என்று உலகில்
 பலராய்ப் பல வேந்தர் வணங்கு கழல்
பல்லவன் மல்லையர் கோன் பணிந்த
 பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே **1128**

கார் மன்னு நீள் விசும்பும் கடலும்
 சுடரும் நிலனும் மலையும் தன் உந்தித்
தார் மன்னு தாமரைக் கண்ணன் இடம்
 தடம் மா மதிள் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
தேர் மன்னு தென்னவனை முனையில்
 செருவில் திறல் வாட்டிய திண் சிலையோன்
பார் மன்னு பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
 பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே **1129**

உரம் தரு மெல் அணைப் பள்ளி கொண்டான்
 ஒருகால் முன்னம் மா உருவாய்க் கடலுள்

வரம் தரு மா மணிவண்ணன் இடம்
மணி மாடங்கள் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
நிரந்தவர் மண்ணையில் புண் நுகர் வேல்
நெடு வாயில் உகச் செருவில் முன நாள்
பரந்தவன் பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே 1130

அண்டமும் எண் திசையும் நிலனும்
அலை நீரொடு வான் எரி கால் முதலா
உண்டவன் எந்தை பிரானது இடம்
ஒளி மாடங்கள் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
விண்டவர் இண்டைக் குழாமுடனே
விரைந்தார் இரியச் செருவில் முனைந்து
பண்டு ஒருகால் வளைத்தான் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே 1131

தூம்பு உடைத் திண் கை வன் தாள் களிற்றின்
துயர் தீர்த்து அரவம் வெருவ முன நாள்
பூம் புனல் பொய்கை புக்கான் அவனுக்கு
இடம்தான் தடம் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
தேம் பொழில் குன்று எயில் தென்னவனைத்
திசைப்ப செருமேல் வியந்து அன்று சென்ற
பாம்பு உடைப் பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே 1132

திண் படைக் கோளரியின் உரு ஆய்
திறவோன் அகலம் செருவில் முன நாள்
புண் படப் போழ்ந்த பிரானது இடம்
பொரு மாடங்கள் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
வெண் குடை நீழல் செங்கோல் நடப்ப
விடை வெல் கொடி வேல் படை முன் உயர்த்த
பண்பு உடைப் பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே 1133

இலகிய நீள் முடி மாவலி தன்
பெரு வேள்வியில் மாண் உரு ஆய் முன நாள்

சலமொடு மா நிலம் கொண்டவனுக்கு
இடம்தான் தடம் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
உலகு உடை மன்னவன் தென்னவனைக்
கன்னி மா மதிள் சூழ் கருவூர் வெருவ
பல படை சாய வென்றான் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே **1134**

குடைத் திறல் மன்னவன் ஆய் ஒருகால்
குரங்கைப் படையா மலையால் கடலை
அடைத்தவன் எந்தை பிரானது இடம்
அணி மாடங்கள் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
விடைத் திறல் வில்லவன் நென்மெலியில்
வெருவ செரு வேல் வலங் கைப் பிடித்த
படைத் திறல் பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே **1135**

பிறை உடை வாள் நுதல் பின்னை திறத்து
முன்னே ஒருகால் செருவில் உருமின்
முறை உடை மால் விடை ஏழ் அடர்த்தாற்கு
இடம்தான் தடம் சூழ்ந்து அழகு ஆய கச்சி
கறை உடை வாள் மற மன்னர் கெட
கடல் போல முழங்கும் கரல் கடுவாய்ப்
பறை உடை பல்லவர் கோன் பணிந்த
பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகரம் அதுவே **1136**

பார் மன்னு தொல் புகழ்ப் பல்லவர் கோன்
பணிந்த பரமேச்சுர விண்ணகர் மேல்
கார் மன்னு நீள் வயல் மங்கையர் தம்
தலைவன் கலிகன்றி குன்றாது உரைத்த
சீர் மன்னு செந்தமிழ் மாலை வல்லார்
திருமாமகள் தன் அருளால் உலகில்
தேர் மன்னராய் ஒலி மா கடல் சூழ்
செழு நீர் உலகு ஆண்டு திகழ்வர்களே **1137**

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "Pattattalmangalam Grant of Nandivarman," *EI* 18 (1925–1926): 115–124; Minakshi 1977: 85–86.

2. Rea 1909: Plate LXIV; *EITA* 1.1 Text: 68–74.

CHAPTER 1

1. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

2. Another tritala-vimana, whose sitting icon shares the bottom floor with icons of the goddesses Shri and Bhumi, was built in Nemali north of Kuram, perhaps during the reign of Nandivarman's great-great grandson, Aparajitavarma (ca. 875–889). During Chola rule, one was built in the Chola realm at Dadapuram (1006), and two in the Pandya realm, at Mannarkoyil (1024) and at Chermadevi (1035).

Among Shaivas, the Dharmaraja Ratha (630–700) at Mamallapuram is the only example of a tritala-vimana that uses each of its three floors for an icon. Between 600 and 1000, the Shaivas built at least fifteen temples of three or four stories, only one housing an icon, all in the northeastern section of the Tamil realm where the Pallavas, Cholas, and Muttaraiyars ruled. Beginning with the Dharmaraja Ratha, the Pallavas erected the first nine of such temples, the Muttaraiyars erected one, and the Cholas five. During those four centuries, no Shaiva temple with three or more stories appears to have been built in the southern and western areas ruled by the Pandyas, the Cheras, and the Ays. At the end of the tenth century, the newly powerful Cholas began to build even taller vimanas, one with sixteen stories at Tanjavur (985–1012) and one with nine stories at Gangaikondacholapuram (1012–1044) (*EITA* 1.1 Text; and Gopalan 1972).

3. This discussion of dynasties is based on *EITA* 1.1 Text: 87–89; and *EITA* 1.2 Text: 104–108.

4. *EITA* 1.2 Text: 107; Gupta and Mahajan 1962: 120–121 and Plates LXXVI–LXXIX; and Huntington 1985: 341–350.

5. For a translation and discussion of this poem, see Hudson 1999.

6. Padmaja 2002: 63. This dynastic account follows *EITA* 1.1 Text: 80–82; 111–112.

7. Hardy 1983: 254–255 and notes. Hardy cites *Tiruviruttam* 100; *TVM* 4.5.11; 4.10.11; 2.8.11; 3.6.11; 5.6.11; 9.2.11. [Maran and Chatakopan are alternative names for Nammalvar—ed.]

8. Ramanujan 1981: 29.

9. Ramanujan 1981: 67.

10. Ramanujan 1981: 76. See Appendix 1 for the full translation.

11. Ramanujan 1981: 3.

12. I discuss the ancient evidence for "Krishna's Mandala" in Hudson 2002b.

13. I have adopted "spacetime" to translate *brahmanda* from contemporary cientific usage, as discussed by Geza Szamosi 1986: 146–147.

14. *shri-parameshvara-mahakashtkaran*; "Kasakudi Plates of Nandivarman Pallavamalla," *SII* 2: 353, line 136.

15. The term *perumanatikal* was used in an 894 inscription of Rajakesarivarman this way: "before the midday serving of auspicious food at the feet of the Bhagavan (*perumanatikal*) in the Puvanimanikka Vishnu-house of our village, daily twelve Brahmans versed in the Veda shall eat from the interest of this gold. . ." (*SII* 3.1.3). Leslie C. Orr of Concordia University brought this to my attention.

16. The inscription is undated, but appears in eighth-century letters. The earliest dated inscription is in the tenth year of the reign of Dantivarman (about 806–807; Gros and Nagaswamy 1970: 80–83).

17. *vitelvitukennuntiruvanai natavi*. From label 10 of the prakara inscription discussed in chapter 4.

18. *EI* 18: 116, 118 n 1, 122. It may be that only one Imperial Architect served Nandivarman along with his son Shri Dandi. He could have designed the first three Bhagavata tritala-vimanas: the Emperor's Vishnu-house facing west in Kanchipuram completed ca. 770, the Shri Veli Vishnu-house completed ca. 806 and facing east in Uttaramerur (known today as the Sundaravarada Perumal Temple), and the one facing east in Kuram completed 808 (*EITA* 1.1 Text: 96–97). By the time of Nandivarman's death in 795–796, the second and third tritala-vimanas may already have been in the planning stage.

19. According to the *Tamil Lexicon* 1983, *patakam* is a street or section of a village, and in Kanchipuram the location of a Vishnu shrine (*vishnusthala*). Aimpanaiccheri may mean "the five (*aim*) palmyra palm (*panai)* section (*cheri*)," or "the five decorations (*punai*) section."

20. Gros and Nagaswamy 1970: 73; *EITA* 1.1 Text: 92–96.

21. The Emperor's Vishnu-house is the only one of those three early tritala-vimanas that faces west. The primary meaning of its name is that it embodies Vasudeva as emperor of the universe sitting inside the bottom sanctum. This appears to be the paradigmatic mode of this mandala. In contrast, the Shriveli Vishnugriha

in Uttaramerur faces east and its icons are in a different sequence: standing on the bottom, sitting on the middle, and reclining on the top (Gros and Nagaswamy 1970: 70–80). Since the icon on the bottom of such vimanas occupies the primary position for worship, the standing icon on the bottom floor of this vimana suggests that it is the "purity (*veli*) of majesty (*shri*)," which is a plausible interpretation of *Shriveli* as a Sanskrit-Tamil compound. Gros and Nagaswamy (1970: 80–81) suggest that Shriveli was one of Nandivarman's titles (see also K. V. Soundara Rajan in *EITA* I.1 Text: 95).

The east-facing icon standing in the bottom shrine of the Shriveli Vishnu-house and the west-facing icon standing in the top shrine of the Emperor's Vishnu-house may have the same meanings (that is, Shakta and its tejas), but differ in their liturgical, and therefore architectural, contexts. In the case of the east-facing vimana at Kuram, we do not have its original name, and not all of its original icons remain. Nevertheless, the sculptures in its porch of Goddess Chandika Durga with her lion and of Ganapati suggest a concern with tejas. Kuram's standing icon on the bottom floor, however, is not the original (*EITA* 1.1 Text: 96–97).

CHAPTER 2

1. The following discussion is guided by Gupta 1989; Gonda 1977: 57–65; Schrader 1916: 27–93; and *BP* 3.26.

2. See also Jaiswal 1967: 34.

3. Gupta 1989: 227; Gupta 1971: 189–204.

4. Sanjukta Gupta suggested this in correspondence. For a concise description of an early portrayal of this vishakhayupa concept in sculpted form, see T. S. Maxwell's discussion of the Kushana-period (ca. 50–200 CE) column from Nand in Rajasthan (Maxwell 1988: 14–16 and plates 3–9). For a discussion of the concept, see Gupta 1971.

5. For the problem of interpreting this stanza (1.155.6), see Griffith 1976: 104 n 6. An implied Bhagavata answer to the question of the identity of the deva who looks down as "master of progeny" (*prajapati*) on his creatures in *Rig Veda* 10.129 and 10.121 is Vishnu, the Person with a thousand heads of 10.90, who acts within the spacetime He produces.

6. The last is sometimes known as the *Uddhava Gita* and it functions as a commentary on portions of the *Bhagavad-gita*. It will be discussed at greater length in chapter 15.

7. For the Upanishads I follow Olivelle 1998.

8. Vaikuntha as "invincible" is Shankara's interpretation of *Brihadaranyake Upanishad* 2.1.6 (Deussen 1980: 426 n 1; and Radhakrishnan 1953: 186).

9. The following discussion draws from an analysis of sources in the *Bhagavata Purana*. For a detailed narrative and metaphysical description of the emergence of Vasudeva's bodies, see *BP* 3.5–10. The sitting Vasudeva prior to the conception of the subtle body is described in 3.5.23–25. The conception of the embryo of the reclining subtle body at the center of the sitting Vasudeva is described in 3.5.26–50. The gestation of this embryo into a fetus by time is described in 3.6. He is the first avatara, the Unobstructed formation (*aniruddha-vyuha*) reclining on the Snake, in whom all beings

emerge, as described in 3.6.8. The manifestation of Brahma in the lotus is described in 3.7–8. The gestation of Brahma in the lotus into the gross body is described in 3.9–12 and in 5.16–26.

10. For a concise discussion of the topic, see Gonda 1977: 59–61.

11. This upanishad appears in the aranyaka supplement to the *Tattiriya Brahmana* of the *Black Yajur Veda*.

12. This axis also appears as the khatvanga: one or more skulls stand on the top of a spinal staff which has the ritualist's hand as its supporting posterior.

13. E. Valentine Daniel (1984) reports that contemporary Tamils similarly understand the atman to be located at the base of the spine. Tantra later identifies this location in the four invisible sheaths or persons as the "wheel that supports the root" (*muladharachakra*). But in the *Bhagavata Purana*'s story of King Prithu's death by yoga, no mention is made of the muladhara or any other chakra. Prithu uses his heel to press on his anus to prevent the downward-moving apana from escaping. He then gently drives the wind (*vayu*) in his body upward to the navel in the region of his stomach, to his heart in his chest, to his throat, to his head, and then he drives it to the highest step and is then free from contact with sensual objects (*nih-spashah*, *BP* 4.23.14). The story of King Prithu is discussed in chapter 10 and appendix 3 below.

14. This concept of jiva resembles the soul in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 2.7). As Jack Bemporad explains, God gives the "life-breath" (*nishmat hayyim*) to Adam to make him a "living soul" (*nefesh hayyah*), which in postbiblical Hebrew is commonly called *neshamah*. *Neshamah* implies breathing, but sometimes conscious life or intelligence in particular. See Sullivan 1989: 205.

15. For a detailed summary of these texts, see Smith 1975.

CHAPTER 3

1. In his urai on the stanza, P. B. Annankaracariyar identifies it as a banner, but does not explain why. C. Minakshi suggests that it refers to the khatvanga standard, which in the Kailasanatha temple is sculpted as a cobra winding around a staff and sheltering the skull at its top with its hood (1977: 56–57). But the khatvanga appears in the next stanza.

2. Pallavas dominated the region for about two and one-half centuries (600–850) and 24 of its 1,809 temples were built during this period (Chockalingam 1971: xxiv, 117–118, and note).

CHAPTER 4

1. See Mahalingam 1977: 25–41; Mahalingam 1969: 137–185; and K. R. Srinivasan in *EITA* 1.1 Text: 22–79.

2. Label eight of the inscription on the south wall of the prakara.

3. Label four of the inscription on the south wall of the prakara.

4. For example, during consecration to the "Man-lion Mantra in the Anustubh Meter," the candidate agrees to become the "son" of the presiding acharya (*Ishvarasamhita* 3.38–44; Smith 1975: 89). Such a rite also coincides with beliefs that ancestors take rebirth as children in their lineage.

5. *Vappa [Bappa] bhattaraka-pada bhakta parama bhagavato bharadvaja sagotra pallavanam dharmma maharajah sri nandi varmma* (lines 9 and 10, slightly modified, in Foulkes *IA* 8: 168).

6. K. R. Srinivasan dated it 741–742.

7. Vikramaditya II left a Kannada inscription in the Rajasimeshvara Temple to report his conquest of the city and his gift to Shiva residing in the splendid building (*EI* 3: 359–360). Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha) built the temple and his son Mahendravarman III, the yuvaraja during his father's lifetime, added onto it (Soundara Rajan in *EITA* 1.1 Text: 59).

8. Foulkes in *IA* 8: 275 (line 46) and 278. Mahalingam identifies Nandipuram as contemporary Nathankovil, three miles south of Kumbhakonam. In the eighth century it was a suburb of the city of Parayarai in the domain of the Muttaraiyars. We know from the thirteen inscriptions on the prakara of the Vaikuntha Perumal temple that the Muttaraiyar named Kataka (or Khatakka) played an important role in Nandivarman's unction at age twelve. Mahalingam suggests that the Kataka Muttaraiyar is the same as Perumbituku Muttaraiyar II, known also as Suvaran Maran. He fought alongside Nandivarman's general, Udayacandra, against the Pandyas and Cheras in at least twelve battles (Mahalingam 1969: 172 and 176 n 119; see also Govindasamy 1965: 38–70). Parayarai was the residence of early members of the Chola line, for example, Sundara Chola. Mahalingam suggests that Nandipuram had been founded as the residence for Nandivarman Pallavamalla and his followers when he stayed in the area. Nandipuram was probably the same as Nandigrama, where Pandya forces besieged Nandivarman and where Udayacandra beheaded "Chitramaya" (Skandasishya) and defeated the Pandyas. K. R. Srinivasan, however, suggests that Nandigrama may have been the same as Nandivaram in Chingleput District (Srinivasan 1964: 10). It seems unlikely, however, that it was the Nandipuri located in Latadesa, a region under Chalukya rule and Dantidurga's first independent conquest (Soundara Rajan in *EITA* 1.2 Text: 107).

9. The village was given to "Ma[dha]vasarma-bhatta, of the Vatsa *gotra* (and) of the Pravachana *sutra*. . . ." Hultzsch notes that the *Pravachanasutra* is the same as the *Baudhayanasutra* (in *EI* 5.8: 52). The grant was given in his fourteenth year. If we date his accession to 731 (while others of the court had gone to find Nandivarman), it would have been 745–746, the year Pallavamalla was restored to the throne with Dantidurga's help. The grant would have been made prior to Skandasishya's flight from Kanchipuram that same year.

10. Soon, however, Vikramaditya II died and Kirtivarman faced a struggle to gain the Chalukya throne for himself. Mahalingam speculates that Kirtivarman then sought Nandivarman's assistance even though he had recently invaded Kanchipuram. A stone inscription from the fifteenth year of Nandivarman's rule (746–747) suggested that interpretation (Mahalingam 1969: 169).

11. Mahalingam 1969: 136–185, esp. 181 n 140 and 182.

12. Subrahmanya Aiyer 1925–1926; Minakshi 1977: 85–86.

13. A guide for their interpretation may be found in the sculpted sequence moving west to east on the south prakara wall of the west-facing Vishnu-house of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

14. Minakshi (1941) discusses them in relation to the panels (pp. 33–38) and provides transliterated originals (pp. 54–55). Mahalingam translates and discusses them in Mahalingam 1969: 139–155, and in Mahalingam 1977: 25–32. Transcribed (but not transliterated) originals are available in *SII* 4: 10–12.

15. My translation is based on those of Minakshi (1941: 33–38, 54–55) and of Mahalingam (1969: 139–155). I have modified both interpretations according to my own reading of the original as found in *SII* 4: 10–12.

16. Commentaries on *Manu* 7.155–156 identify four mulaprakriti: the king in the mandala's center, an adversary, an indifferent ruler capable of aiding or defeating the former, and an opposing ruler.

17. As Mahalingam notes, *chivikai* (*shivika*) in Pali usage means the balcony of a mansion (Mahalingam 1969: 141 n 16). The *Pali-English Dictionary* lists *shivika-gabbha* as a room shaped like a palanquin, an alcove. Its Sanskrit meaning as vehicle (*shibika*) does not fit the context. In the original Tamil-grantha inscription as published, what Mahalingam and Minakshi read as *vidai* (leave to go) appears as *patai* (army). Army makes sense, for we know from the next panel that Pallavamalla traveled with an army and the gift of it must have been an important ceremony. Nevertheless, I have kept Minakshi and Mahalingam's reading of *vitai* for *patai* since they consulted the original inscription (Mahalingam 1969: 27 n 7). For the Tamil-grantha script, see C. Sivaramamurti 1966: plate 1.

18. Mahalingam interprets *pallavati karaiyar* as "junior member of the Pallava ruling family" (*pallavadi araiyar*) on analogy with *gangadhi araiyar*, which means "Ganga princes ruling over provinces" (1969: 144–145 and n 25). But it may refer to the forces depicted in the panel as "many" (*palla*) great men (*atikar* [*adhika*]) who are noble men (*aiyar*)." Mahalingam singles out one man wearing a kirita on his head, who greets Nandivarman on horseback, as the Pallavadi Araiyar (Mahalingam 1969: 145).

19. The meaning of *vitelvituku* may be "who routs (*vituku*) [enemies] instantly (*vitel*)." Vitelvituku may have been a title as well as an oath in the lineage descending from Bhimavarman (Mahalingam 1969: 138–139). Nandivarman bore it as the title Vitelvituku Pallava, as we know from the man who inscribed Nandivarman's grant to sixteen Brahmins in 792–793. He signed himself as the son of "the master architect of Vitelvituku Pallava" (*vitelvituku-pallava-peruntaccan*) living in the Aimpanaicceri in Kaccippetu (Subrahmanya Aiyer 1925–1926: 116 and 118 n 1).

20. *SII* 2: 501–517, esp. 508, 510, stanzas 5–8; D. Srinivasan 1979: 15–21.

21. Gurumurthy 1979: 4–11; D. Srinivasan 1979: 10–11, 17, 20.

22. For Arumuga Navalar and his schools, see Hudson 1992a, 1992b, 1995b, and 1996b.

23. Snodgrass 1985: 141–152; *Manimekalai* 1, see Cattanar 1989, 1994.

24. Gomez and Woodward 1981: 93. Fontein 1981 cites relief number Ib38 in the depiction of the *Divyavadana*.

25. N. J. Krom describes the scene this way: "The king . . . sits on a wide couch with a back, in a pendapa; on this same seat is the queen and between them a rather-damaged third figure. . . . Next to the throne some female attendants stand and kneel. Outside the pendapa we see the king's guard armed with sword and shield, and in the background the royal umbrella and an elephant with his mahout. On

the left of the pendapa opposite the king a figure kneels on a bench, dressed in royal or godlike garments, and judging by the flowers in his hands, offering homage. His retinue are sitting on the ground behind him, first the umbrella-bearer and next the unmistakable figure of Airavata, with the elephant's trunk in his headdress, elephant ears and the angkuca on his shoulder. This makes it certain that the kneeling visitor can be no other than Cakra. The rest of the attendants are armed with sword and shield or bow and arrows, while in the background a standard and a fruit tree are to be seen" (Krom 1927: 268–269).

26. An unexplored source for Bhagavata, Shaiva, sramana, and other religious influences in West Asian literatures and practices in the pre-Christian centuries is this ancient royal cult of Indra and Airavata. After Alexander returned from the Indus River, West Asian courts imported Indian elephants and engraved the elephant-head hood or crown on coins. Imported Indian elephants could not have survived without mahouts and men specializing in elephant care and rites, and since they were to be abroad for years, they would have brought families with them. A single elephant in a West Asian court implied a number of resident Indians, perhaps for generations, and they would have patronized their own religious leaders. The cult of Indra and Airavata in West Asian courts may therefore have been more directly influential on religions developing in the area than anyone has realized. I am indebted to Sonia Rhie for this information about the elephant cult in West Asia.

27. *Katavar-kon* appears in the *Periya Puranam* as the title of a Pallava king in Kanchipuram named Aiyatikal Katavarkon (Arumuka Navalar 1933: 404). Although he was an ardent Shaiva devotee and Nayanar, that title suggests his lineage originated with Bhagavata Pallavas. If *katavan* derives from the Tamil *katu*, which means forest, the title means "Aiyatikal the king (*kon*) of the forest people (*katavar*)." But *aiyatikal* itself denotes "the [slave] at the feet (*atikal*) of the master (*ai*)"; that suggests the status of an "Indra of Men" consecrated to the service of God through an acharya. The katavar he ruled therefore may have been the habitants of the forest region (*katu*) identified by Bhagavata Pallava clans with Indra's Khandava forest (*katava*) where Arjuna and Krishna built Indraprastha.

28. *Tiruvaymoli* 2.7.1 and *Periya Tirumoli* 7.2.6. See also Narayanan 1987: 52–54.

29. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., in a personal communication, kindly alerted me to what may be the "sandcastle" nature of the following argument. Nevertheless, because of the documented liturgical connections between the Pallava realm and Cambodia in these centuries, I think it worth making.

30. Coedes 1968: 113. In this inscription, Pancharatras, like Shaivas, may denote Brahmin priests following their respective Agamas, perhaps including acharyas. Bhagavatas, like Pashupatas, may denote householders consecrated to their respective Agamas. Sattvatas, like Tapasvins, may denote renouncers and people consecrated to ascetic disciplines according to their respective Agamas. Buddhists presumably refers to bhikshus and may include those of the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Agamas.

31. Minakshi (1941: 47–50) gives a slightly different interpretation to this sequence.

32. E. Hultzsch, "Kasakudi Plates of Nandivarman Pallavamalla," in *SII* 2: 342–361.

33. [This scene is not shown in the illustrations here—ed.] Minakshi suggests that the elephant may be the one named Pattavardhana, which Nandivarman had captured from the Ganga king along with a necklace containing the gem called the Ugrodaya, and that the rider may be holding the necklace in a vessel above his head (*SII* 2: 529, stanzas 6–7).

34. *BP* 10.58.32–55. These emblems resemble the urdhva-pundra insignia worn today by consecrated Bhagavatas on their body, notably the forehead, suggesting that the bearer of the emblem is a demonic "bull" Krishna has conquered.

35. Minakshi (1977: 207–208) notes that it does not depict persecution of "heretics," but rather judicial punishment. The public display of criminal bodies appears to have been customary practice for centuries. In about 1693, the Marava ruler of Uraiyur west of Tanjavur executed the Jesuit John De Brito in public and left his decapitated body with severed hands and feet hanging on a tall post for animals to eat (Neill 1984: 307).

36. The word *chilai*, as the Sanskrit *shila*, means stone or statue; as a Tamil word it also means "sound" or "twang" and "bow." Kalikanri's usage in stanza two appears to draw upon both meanings. The implication is that Udayachandra's victories function as the stone icon's firm bow.

37. As H. Daniel Smith's summary of the text explains: "Just as the Sudarshana discus represents Visnu's own shakti-Power and divine Will to rule wisely and benignly (yet powerfully), so when a king employs his royal arms and army he is exercising an analogous (mundane) power to arrest his enemies and protect his subjects. . . . From the face of Sudarshana come certain weapons (e.g., arrows), from his chest others (e.g., slings), from his thighs some others (e.g., combustibles) and from his feet yet others (e.g., spears); moreover from other parts of his body other weapons of warfare have their divine source in Sudarshana" (Smith 1975: 54–55).

38. Vishnuchittan (Periyalvar) indicates in *Tiruppallantu* 7 that Bhagavatas were branded with the wheel, which implied branding by the conch. In *Perumal Tirumoli* 2.8., where Kalikanri records Nandivarman's consecration at the temple of the Eight-Armed Lord, he refers to the brands in stanza four. The contemporary rite of branding for Sri Vaishnavas has been filmed by H. Daniel Smith (Smith n.d.).

CHAPTER 5

1. [Figure 5.1 is misleading; it is not clear why it was "revised" to eliminate the innermost wall, shown in Figure I.2 and other ground plans of the temple. There is, in fact, an intermediate wall between the sanctum wall and the outer wall of the vimana, and there are two pradakshinapathas, one on either side of it. The inner pradakshinapatha contains the stairs that lead to the second floor; the outer pradakshinapatha contains the panels with the Samkarshana and Anirudha vyuhas, which can be glimpsed through door-slits in the outer vimana wall. The Pradyumna vyuha is on the outer wall of the sanctum itself, and is visible through the east-facing doorway. —ed.]

2. Sri Sundaravaratha Pattachari reported that the place where the standing icon once stood is still evident on the sanctum's floor. It may have stood alone without icons of the Goddesses Shri and Bhumi, because in *Periya Tirumoli* 2.9.9, Kalikanri

identified it as Krishna, the heroic lover of Pinnai, and because in what appears to be a depiction of the missing icon on the prakara wall, the icon stands alone. See Figure 4.8.

3. Following Patrick Olivelle's translation of *BU* 4.3–4 (Olivelle 1998: 111–127).

4. Hudson 1980: 544.

5. Levy defines "mesocosm" as "an organized meaningful world intermediate to the microcosmic worlds of individuals and the culturally conceived macrocosm, the universe" (Levy 1990: 2).

6. For circumambulation in the *BP,* see 1.14.13. "Resorb," which means to swallow or suck in again, and to break down and assimilate something previously differentiated, is particularly apt for the counterclockwise sequence of formations.

7. [This doorway does not appear in the plans in this volume. The plan in *EITA* 1.1 Text: 69 shows that there was once a doorway from the sanctum to the inner pradakshinapatha, which contains the stairs. There does not appear ever to have been direct access from the sanctum to the outer pradakshinapatha with the vyuha panels, though there were once doorways to it from the ardhamandapa. —ed.]

8. See *BP* 10.61.22; 10.54.60, 55.1–2; and 3.1.30.

9. The latter, as I have argued elsewhere, may have been addressed to a Kanchipuram audience (Hudson 1997).

10. *Cilappatikaram* 6.39–63. Swaminatha Aiyar (1965: 37 n 125) lists the eleven dances as "heroic dances" (*puranatakam*), and they appear to match the eleven listed in *Cilappatikaram* 6.39–63. Pradyumna's dance parallels Shiva's dance as hermaphrodite, which is one of the eleven in the *Cilappatikaram* and is enacted in *Cilappatikaram* 28.71–75.

11. [The six bhagas are not discussed in this chapter; Figure 5.13, which was among the materials Dennis Hudson had not incorporated into the draft on which this book is based, illuminates discussions throughout the book, however, and so seems useful to include.—ed.]

CHAPTER 6

1. At least four descriptions of Vasudeva with eight arms appear in the *Bhagavata Purana*. When he appears to Daksha at his sacrifice he holds the lotus (*BP* 4.7.18–22). But when he appears to Daksha reborn as the son of the Prachetasas brothers (*BP* 6.4.35–40), and in the Narayana-kavacha mantra that Vishvarupa teaches Indra (*BP* 6.8.12), a noose replaces the lotus. The description of Trivikrama, however, omits the shield and variable hand and retains the wheel, bow, conch, mace, sword, and quiver (*BP* 8.20.30–33).

2. The Attiyur rites in *Periya Tirumoli* 2.8, and the Sri Rangam rites in *Periya Tirumoli* 5.7.

3. The dismemberment of other victims is described in *SB* 3.8.2.12–18 and 3.8.3.3–29; of the horse in 13.3.1–2. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (1988: 7–25) translates portions of the ashvamedha from the *Shatapatha* and *Taittiriya Brahmanas*.

4. See *Mahabharata* 2.30.10–15 and 2.36.1–4 (van Buitenen 2: 87; 95); and Bhattar 1983: no. 23, pp. 149–150, and nos. 654–655, pp. 581–582.

5. *BP* 10.39.46–55. The devis (10.39.55) may be nine or twelve depending on the interpretation of the last four as separate individuals, or as descriptions of the single Maya (see Tagare 1976–1979 4: 1498; and Tapasyananda 1980–1982 3: 200–201).

6. Compare *BP* 10.40.44–57 with 10.89.22–26.

7. [Using the sandhi rules, the parenthetical phrase is *yogeshvaro harih*, a stock phrase in the *Mahabharata* and elsewhere. I am grateful to Travis Smith for this explanation.—ed.]

8. The Krishnakatha does not say that Krishna and Balarama get dressed after they wrestle and before they dance, but the designers portray Krishna that way here, and Krishna and Balarama that way in the depiction of Kamsa's imminent destruction.

CHAPTER 7

1. In their Sanskrit texts, early Pallavas identified the Cholas with Nagas, which explains the Tamil names Nagai for the region and Nagapattinam for its harbor town. For the intermarriage of Pallavas with the Naga rulers of Kanchipuram during the fourth century CE, see C. R. Srinivasan 1979: 1–68; and Hudson 1997.

2. *BP* 8.4.6–12. Airavata emerges from the churning of the Milk Ocean depicted in Panel 7.

3. This "season" (*ritu*) begins with the period of menstrual discharge and lasts for sixteen days. Girls who have attained the age of menstruation are also called *ritumat* (Monier-Williams 1964: 244a–b).

4. *BP* 4.24.35. Accoring to Narada in *Satvata-samhita* 5.82–87, once Vasudeva activates all things, he makes the Plower formation to deliver them, the Pre-eminently Mighty formation to control them, and the Unobstructed formation to protect them.

5. For Dvala's curse of Huhu, see Tagare 1976–1979 3: 1014 n 1.

6. We know this from the "Narayaniya" portion of the *Mahabharata* (12.321–353) found in the critical edition (*Mahabharata* 16.2.B: 1812–2014), and in the translation by K. M. Ganguli (Ganguli 1982, 1992 10: 114–217). Once Narada left the ashram of Narayana and Nara at Badari and went to the top of Mount Meru. In the northwest he saw White Island rising from the Ocean of Milk. It is also called Vaikuntha, which refers to a palace in a town of the same name. The palace contains a throne room and an inner bedroom. The Unobstructed resides there; sometimes he sits, sometimes he reclines, and sometimes he stands, but his archetypal posture is the royal one of sitting under an umbrella, fanned with flywhisks.

The *Bhagavata Purana* provides at least four descriptions of Vaikuntha (3.15–16; 10.39.38–57 and 40.1–30; 10.89.8–12; and 10.89.47–62). Swami Tapasyananda summarizes the information in 1980–1982 1: xxx–xxxi. The *Linga Purana* (Part 2.1.42–82) says that Brahma saw Narayana on White Island seated on a holy seat (*bhadra pitha*) in the middle of an aerial chariot with a thousand doors (chariot and palace are both called *vimana*). The Bhagavan Narayana has just awakened from yogic slumber and Goddess Lakshmi joins him. The gandharva named Tumburu entertains them by playing the lute and singing. The *Kurma Purana* (1.49.45–61) describes White Island in detail and notes that the Bhagavan reclines there on the Snake.

Similarly, the *Matsya Purana* (249) says that Vaikuntha shines like a white lotus and Narayana reclines there in deep meditation, his left hand under his head while Lakshmi massages his feet.

The northwest portion of the Milk Ocean is also the location of other islands. The "Narayaniya" tells of the mountain Vaijayanta in the Milk Ocean where Brahma taught his son Rudra about the one and the many purushas. Somadeva in *Kathasaritsagara* 54.19–23 tells of the island Narikela in the middle of the great sea, from which devas go through the air to White Island.

7. According to P. V. Kane, darbhas are blades of the grass that do not sprout other blades, while kushas are blades that do. Grasses collected on the New Moon day of the month of Shravana may be used repeatedly because they do not grow stale (Kane 1974 Part 1: 657).

8. As we shall see in the discussion on the south-facing panels of the vimana, the word *astra*, which denotes an arrow, is used in rites of prayoga to denote a mantra.

9. Explained by translator of Valmiki 1995: 3.1441.

10. The text does not explain the purpose of the unction, but the rite of abhisheka in this context indicates that it was the ritual completion of Rama's crossing the ocean to Lanka.

11. Pravarasena was known in Cambodia in the last decade of the ninth century (Pravarasena 1976: 17–18).

12. K. K. Handiqui's translation (1976) is modified in all cases.

13. Van Buitenen 2: 632. The entire story of Kausika in "The Devoted Wife, and the Hunter" (van Buitenen 2: 614-638) appears to be Bhagavata Dharma very similar to the Pancharatra Agama, the *Bhagavata Purana*, and the Alvar poems.

14. In a *Mahabharata* version of the churning story (1.15–17), the "bucket of the Ocean" that surrounds the inhabited world becomes milky from the juices of herbs and resins of trees on the golden mountain Mandara that flow into it when it is churned (van Buitenen 1: 72–76). These juices contain amrita. When Brihaspati later finds it muddy, he curses it to be infested with creatures. Elsewhere in the epic, the Ocean is said to have become milky from the milk of the four cows that support the four quarters. In Ganguli's translation of Udyoga Parva 102 of the *Mahabharata*, the same story refers to another Milky Ocean that was created by a single jet of milk from Surabhi, the mother of all cattle (Ganguli 1982, 1990 4: 208–209).

15. Another version of the churning, one that Hayagriva told to Agastya in Kanchipuram, is given in the *Lalita-mahatmya*, a text appended to the *Brahmanda Purana*, which dates after the tenth century. That version moves from the story of the Milk Ocean churning directly into the story of the Goddess Kamakshi. See *Brahmanda Purana* 3.4.9–30 (Tagare translation 1984 4: 1057–1223).

16. Tagare (1976–1979 3: 1031) interprets *BP* 8.7.12 as it is portrayed here. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2: 322) interprets it to mean that the Bhagavan stands on the top of the mountain and presses it down with one of his hands.

17. G. P. Quackenbos, in his translation of Mayura's *Suryasataka* 42, translates *kalakuta* as "black deception," citing a commentary that likens it to tamas, "because of its possessing the essence of illusion (*moha*)" (Quackenbos 1965: 158–159).

18. Shiva's emblem as the bull is mentioned in *BP* 8.8.1; and 8.12.1 says Shiva has the bull on his flag (*vrisha-dhvaja*). Along with the khatvanga, the Pallavas had the bull as their emblem on flags and copper plates.

19. For example, Narasimhavarman Mamalla (630–668) appears to have depicted the doctrine of Shiva's "five faces" in a west-facing cave-temple with one shrine devoted to each "face": Ishana, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva, and Sadyojata. K. R. Srinivasan suggests Sadyojata was in the middle; Ishana to his right; Tatpurusha to his left; Vamadeva in the northern recessed shrine and Aghora in the southern recessed shrine (K. R. Srinivasan 1964: 141 n 1).

20. The destruction of the Three Cities (*Tripura*) occurs during the auspicious midday abhijinmuhurta when Boar kills Hiranyaksha (Golden Eyes). The Bhagavata version of the Tripura story is told in *BP* 7.10.52–71.

21. Brahma says that he and Bhava (Shiva) are fractions (*kala*) of a portion (*amsha*) of the avatara who emits all beings (*BP* 8.5.21). The first avatara is the Unobstructed formation reclining in the dark waters of Vasudeva's womb, as depicted inside this middle-floor sanctum, and his portion is Ajita on White Island in the Milk Ocean.

22. Chitraratha, king of gandharvas, tells Arjuna that "Whatever is a means to success in the world is known as an embodiment of the thuderbolt [Indra's vajra]. . . . The thunderbolt of the baronage is their steeds—the steeds are known to be indestructible" (*Mahabharata* 1.158.45–50; van Buitenen 1: 322).

23. Stanza two of the six that introduce the recitation of the "Thousand Names of Vishnu" makes this indentification (Bhattar 1983: 45).

24. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 1: 328) and Tagare (1976–1979 3: 1038) identify the months as Chaitra and Vaisakha.

25. Asuras' delight in liquor is an example of their correlation to the ritual class (*varna*) of Shudras, who were viewed as drinkers and in Tamil literature were associated with Varuna (Hudson 2000a, chap. 5). As R. S. Sharma observes, "Drinking seems to have been a vice specially associated with the *sudras*, for the list of words for spiritous liquor and various processes of its preparation and for intoxication are enumerated by Amara in the *sudra-varga* [of the *Amarakosha* (2.10.39–43)]." See R. M. Sharma 1980: 285.

26. Monier-Williams: 509. The meaning of *dhanvantari*, "moving in a curve," and the northeast location of his offerings suggest the sun rising in a curve that begins in the east, ascends to the apex, and descends in the west. In the *Mahabharata*, Monier-Williams says, the name also means "of the sun." Dhanvantari's appearance here on the way to the northeast corner indicates that the churning takes place in the last hour of night as the sun begins to lighten the eastern horizon, but has not yet risen above it. In this context the churning denotes the sadhaka's use of mantra in audible recitation (*japa*) during the brahmamuhurta.

Dhanvantari appears to pair with Ganesha. Krishna describes Ganesha's attributes to Parvati in *Brahmanda Purana* 3.42.30–44. Ganesha is the guardian of Shiva in the Pancharatra text *Jnanamritasara-samhita* 1.7 (Smith 1975: 135). In some cases the pair appears on the south-facing side of the Pancharatra mandala that governs the design of this and other temples. One case is the Varadarajaswami Temple, which follows the *Padma-samhita* based on the *Jayakhya-samhita* of the Pancharatra Agama

and is connected by tradition to worship in Kanchipuram (Smith 1975: 198). This temple contains a west-facing Man-lion shrine dating at least to 1053 CE. In the enclosed verandah surrounding it, a Dhanvantari shrine is at the southeast corner and a Ganesha shrine is at the southwest corner. They may date to the late Chola period. Dhanvantari sits with two hands, one holding the amrita pot. Ganesha's trunk turns to his right, rather than to his left, as is more common (Raman 1975: 45, 116–117). Another case is at the early sixth-century sanctum of the Vishnu-house at Deogarh (Devgadh), which appears to have been built according to the same Pancharatra mandala. It, too, faces west. Facing south on its southwest pilaster sits Ganesha. Facing south at its southeast pilaster sits a figure that appears to be Dhanvantari (Vats 1952; Hudson 1991).

27. Milk is used as soma in the Sautramani, a sacrifice employing sura and soma to regenerate the patron after he has performed the Soma Sacrifice (*Satapatha Brahmana* 12.7–9.3).

CHAPTER 8

1. One example appears at the three-story vimana in Kottiyur (Koshtiyur) near Madurai.

2. The root of desire and anger is *lobha* (*Manu* 7.4.9) or *sanga* (*BG* 2.62) produced by the *rajas-guna* (*BG* 3.37).

3. [The story is narrated in the order that it is told in the *Bhagavata Purana*, with the frames numbered in the order of their nesting, number 1 being the outermost frame. Figure 8.1 clarifies the structure.—ed.]

4. The process is described in *Rig Veda* 10.90. The first four stanzas of this "Praise of the Person" (*purusha-sukta*) describe the Person and summarize the events detailed in the following twelve stanzas. Stanza five is the pivot on which the Person turns himself into spactime. It cryptically describes his birth as his son through his womb called *viraj* (ruling far and wide). This son is the *vairaja purusha* (person born of viraj). As described in the following stanzas, the Person then offers his son to himself by means of himself as deva priests, who use spring, summer, and autumn. His dismembered body is burned up entirely and fashioned into directional space, chronological time, and all creatures. The concluding stanza sixteen summarizes the teaching: The Person sacrifices himself as victim to himself as patron and produces spacetime. Interpreted more abstractly, this Person is pure consciousness possessing the essence (*pradhana*) of matter as his queen "ruling far and wide." Pure consciousness enters into her and becomes embodied by her material essence. This embodied consciousness then transforms itself into the denser modes of matter (*prakriti*) that constitute spacetime. This threefold process takes place "inside" pure consciousness as a dynamic interaction between king and queen.

The sponsor of a Vedic sacrifice, who must be married, reenacts this process by playing all the roles through substitutes. The patron is a man together with his wife; he is the Person and she is his womb (*viraj*) represented by the ground on which the sacrificial arena is to be constructed. The husband as Person constructs the sacrificial arena on the earth by means of priests, who use his bodily measurements for its architectural plan. Their construction constitutes his insemination of her and

his birth as the vairaja purusha son. The husband as this son now sits with his wife inside the arena and is represented by the animals to be sacrificed. Priests playing the roles of devas smother the son, butcher him, and offer him into the fire. He thus becomes spacetime. But the patron can become a renewed participant in it only when he steps out of his role as sponsor by means of concluding dakshina gifts to the priests.

In the Bhagavata Dharma, the Person is Narayana and viraj is Shakti as his womb's primordial matter (*pradhana*). Narayana "inseminates" Shakti with a seed (*bija*) or embryo (*garbha*) of his self and becomes his son Narayana reclining in her uterine water as vairaja purusha. The son's embodiment as the material shape of spacetime is his ego "awakening" as Brahma in the lotus, who turns himself into a body of seven layers and then wakes and sleeps for one hundred of his years under the gaze of Narayana the son, the vairaja purusha.

5. The same later happened to Dantavaktra when Krishna killed him with his mace Kaumodaki (*BP* 10.78.1–16). These two stories appear on the southern side of this sanctum (Panels 21 and 22) and will be discussed in chapter 10.

6. His blood offering parallels Parashurama's blood offerings to his ancestors in *Mahabharata* 3.115–117 and 3.81.20–34 (van Buitenen 2: 443–447 and 379–389).

7. [Although this is an unusual translation of *linga*, Monier-Williams 1964: 902b, s.v. *lingin*, gives "having a subtle body" as one meaning, and refers to *BP*.—ed.]

8. *BP* 7.2.50–56. The avadhuta named Dattatreya tells a similar story (11.7.52–74) and appears in south-facing Panel S3.

9. For a discussion of the idea of the devotee as extended into the bodies of others who function as his body, and of the violent consequences similar to those portrayed here, see Hudson 1989: 373–404.

10. [The level of the frame is not determined by the narrator but by its place in the nesting. This story is directly framed by Narada's telling of Hiryanakashipu's story (frame 3) and so is on frame level 4, even though the narrator is different from that of the previous frame 4 story, Hiryanakashipu himself. See Figure 8.1.—ed.]

11. [Though Narada is the narrator, this story is framed by Prahlada's narration, and so is a frame 5 story, not frame 3 like the previous Narada story.—ed.]

12. F.D.K. Bosch's analysis of the ashvattha guides this interpretation (Bosch 1960).

13. This discussion follows the rajasuya as presecribed in *Satapatha Brahmana* 5.2–5.5.19 (Eggeling, tr. 1882, 1885, 1894, 1897, 1900 41: 42–142).

14. *BP* 9.17.8–12. Saubhari descends in the patrilineage of Kanva or Angirasa from Sobhari, composer of *Rig Veda* 8.19–22.

15. The reference to Krishna as Ruler of Yoga's Ruler identifies him as the ruler of Shiva, who is yoga's ruler. This specific title picks up the theme of the kalakuta poison from the Milk Ocean churning. Shiva as Ruler of Yoga keeps the poison in his blue-stained throat, but some of it spills out and is absorbed by snakes, plants, and creatures whose "bite" cause untimely deaths. A specific ceremony in the rajasuya removes these "mordacious ones" from the newly born king so he may die by old age alone, but here Krishna's glance of amrita is all that is needed (*SB* 5.4.1.1–2). The mordacious elements are thought of as reddish snakes, which are "neither worms nor non-worms." To get rid of them the priest has them "eaten" in a rite appropriate

to their anomalous status. He places a piece of "red metal" into the mouth of a "long-haired man," a eunuch sitting in the sadas shed. The red metal "is neither iron nor gold" and the man with long hair is neither man nor woman, "for being a male, he is not a woman, and being long-haired, he is not a man." The anomalous "snakes" given to biting are thus "swallowed" as a piece of anomalous metal by an anomalous person identified by his hair.

16. Shuka plays with the word *krishna* (black) and on the connection of poison to snake. The Lord who is black (*krishna*) perceives that the river, which is black (*krishna*), is poisoned by the black snake (*krishna-ahi*). Shuka hints that all three (Krishna, poisoned water, and snake) express Narayana's omniscience. The white Balarama absents himself from this episode because his role as bala is completed; only the black Govinda as jnana can banish the serpent (*sarpa*) of kalmasha from the consciousness it poisons.

17. *BP* 10.16.16. The description of Balarama as *bhagavan madhavo bala* is translated by Tapasyananda (1980–1982 3: 111) as "the venerable Balarama, who was only a manifestation of Krishna." Tagare (1976–1979 4: 1361) renders it "the glorious Lord Balarama." I have interpreted it to mean "the indefatigable energy of the Bhagavan Madhava." Madhava, the third of the twelve murtis, appears in Panel 12 concluding the sequence by way of the north, as discussed in chapter 6.

18. *BP* 10.16.32. Krishna's dance of victory (*tandava*) parallels Shiva's tandava dance in the Shaiva Agama. Krishna and Shiva are each believed to be the "first teacher of all the arts." In the Tamil *Tirumantiram* (ca. 7th–8th centuries), Shiva is portrayed dancing on the back of the demon Muyalakan (Zvelebil 1985: 46–51). In later sculptures, Muyalakan holds a snake and Shiva wears a snake. According to M. C. Venkatacami, the snake symbolizes the anavamala, the fine (*anava*) defilement (*mala*) of ignorance, which envelopes the soul (*jiva*) to keep it defiled by the impurities of *karma* (*kanmamala*) and delusion (*mayamala*) (Venkatacami 1967: 35–37). Kaliya is the Bhagavata version of that snake; he represents the kalmasha that poisons the thread of passion (*rajoguna*) and obscures the atman, the final and most fundamental defilement to be removed before complete "awakening."

19. *BP* 10.16.33–53. The early commentator Sridhara Svami identifies the prayer's three divisions as: 1) acquiescence in the punishment given to Kaliya (first six verses); 2) praise of the Bhagavan (ten verses); and 3) prayer to the Bhagavan (five verses). See Tagare 1976–1979 4: 1364.

20. See Panel E5 (chapter 14), where Lakshmi in Ketumala prays to the Preeminently Mighty formation for the touch of his hands on her head.

21. *BP* 10.16.45: *namah krsnaya ramaya vasudevasutaya ca / pradyumnaya-aniruddhaya satvatam pataye namah*. Tagare (1976–1979 4: 1367) elaborates the statement with interpretation and Tapasyananda (1980–1982 3: 114) glosses over it. By stating that Balarama issues forth from Vasudeva, the point appears to be to place Krishna on one side and the three formations on the other.

CHAPTER 9

1. Prishni and Aditi appear sequentially in two poems of the *Rig Veda* by Bharadvaja. In *Rig Veda* 6.66, Prishni is the mother of Maruts, whose embryo she receives

from Rudra; she is a cow that gives milk once a year. Her Marut sons are unimpeded fires in golden chariots that drive themselves. They dwell in human hearts to purify defects and in the cosmos to unite heaven and earth; they give rain and abundant fertility to their worshipers, and to the one they protect in battle they give sons, grandsons, cattle, and water. In 6.67, Aditi is the mother of Mitra and Varuna, the eldest of all existing things. They are not the same and are not worshiped with other devas, but they restrain men from evil, give unassailable shelter, bounty, and rain as they prop up the summit of the sky each day (Wilson 1990: 4.190–197). Varuna is dark night and Mitra is bright daytime and they are worshiped together as a single whole.

2. *Tirtha* may refer specifically to sadhakas of the Pancharatra Agama and the Shaiva Agama. The Buddhist Pali canon refers to members of other religions (other than Brahmins of the three fires teaching the path to Brahma) as *tirthika* (*tirthiya*); and it favors those matted-hair ascetics teaching karmavada and kriyavada (*Mahavagga* 1.38.1–7, 11; cited in Jennings 1974: 602–603). Brahmins of three fires appear in the *Tevijja Sutta*, *Digha Nikaya* 13: 13–14, 25 (Jennings 1974: 556–557). The Magadhan ruler Seniya Bimbisara advised the Shakyamuni Buddha to have his monks teach the people on the fourteenth-fifteenth and eighth of the half-month, because this is what the titthiya in Magadha did and they gained followers. He accepted his advice according to *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Maha-vagga*, *Khandhaka* 2.1.1–4 (cited in Jennings 1974: 89–90). Buddhist tradition in this account thus claims to follow the earlier precedence of Pancharatra and Shaiva Agamikas in Magadha.

3. In another account, a horse sacrifice sponsored by Sagara leads Bhagiratha to perform tapas to bring Ganga down to Earth. She descends from Hari's foot onto the head of Rudra Shiva, and from there to Bharata—a story frequently depicted in Pallava temples and monuments of the seventh and eighth centuries; *BP* 9.8.7–31; 9.9.1–15.

4. On the fifth and final day of the soma sacrifice, after the soma has been extracted, poured into the fire, and drunk by the priests, a goat is sacrificed. Before the animal is strangled, it is positioned in front of the sacrificial post (*yupa*) at the east and made to face west, the region of Varuna. A rope of darbha grass (*varuna-pasa*) with two strands is tied around its right foreleg and fastened tightly to the right horn and then tied to the yupa. See Kane 1974 2.2: 1115–1117; Sen 1982: s.v. "Agnistoma," 32–33.

5. According to *Vishnu-sutra* 1 (dated in its present form between the 3rd–4th and 11th centuries), after her rescue by Boar, Goddess Earth went to Vasudeva to learn how to sustain herself. She saw him there in White Island in the Ocean of Milk, sitting on the Snake with Goddess Lakshmi; his conch, wheel, mace, and lotus flower were present in human forms. He had one body and four faces (1.60–62; *Vishnu-sutra* 1880: xxxii and 3–12). This is a common depiction of Vaikunthanatha in sculpture, according to Desai 1996: 8–10; 99–106. Shaivas similarly fuse four heads into a single form to represent Shiva's five faces of flaming light in the panchamukhalinga. See, for example, T. S. Maxwell's discussion of "The Parel Heptad" in Maxwell 1988: 186–232.

6. Prior to this restoration little remained of the wheel except the round shape. But Trivikrama's fingers hold it by what would be the bottom of four flames at

the wheel's quarters. The left arm is broken, but the hand remains at the north corner of the flat plane from which Bali jumps up, and it holds the damaged conch by its long end.

7. The earlier Rajasimhesvara Temple anticipates this manner of depicting Ravana in its panel at the northeast corner of the prakara wall depicting him with the monkey Valin. Ravana has three visible faces, but only six visible arms.

8. *Manu* 10.23, 43–44. The Mallas may include rulers in Southeast Asia, where the Pancharatra and the Shaiva Agamas were patronized at least by the seventh century (Coedes 1968: 73).

9. See "Udayendiram Plates of Nandivarman," *SII* 2: 361–374; and Foulkes 1879b: 273–284.

10. Following Heesterman (1957: 15–18) and *Satapatha Brahmana* (*SB*) 5.2–5 (Eggeling 1885 41: 1–129.

11. To begin the rajasuya, the priest makes an offering to Anumati. He then goes south to a natural cleft in the earth, starts a fire, and makes an offering to Nirriti. "For Nirriti is this (Earth)," he says, "whomsoever she seizes upon with evil, him she seizes upon with destruction (*nirriti*): hence whatever part of this (Earth) is of the Nirriti nature, that he thereby propitiates; and thus Nirriti does not seize upon him, while being consecrated" (*SB* 5.2.3). This natural cleft to the south appears to denote Nirriti's extension from earth into the underworld. Whenever the ground bursts open in a village, house, fire-house, or meeting place, Nirriti is to be worshiped by twelve days of butter offerings from the milk of four cows ("a white, a black, a red, and a one-coloured one"). The concluding offerings begin in the north, move to the south, then to the west, and back to the north, leaving the east untouched. After an offering to Vastoshpati (Master of the Dwelling), the priest pours the refuse in the cleft, completes the oblations, and sprinkles the cleft with "lustral water." (See Eggeling's excerpt from the *Kausika-sutra* 13.28 in note 2, Eggeling 1885 41: 43).

12. The father of master elephants (*kunjarapati*) appears to be Gajendra, and this may be the earliest known reference to the story of his release from the "grasper" (*graha*); the story is discussed in chapter 7.

13. *Mbh* 3.245–246, van Buitenen 1975 2: 700–705; and *Mbh,* Anusasana Parva 13.4, Ganguli 1982, 1990 10: 14.

14. *Mbh* 1.88, 3.131; van Buitenen 1975 2: 208–209, 470–472.

15. *Mbh* 12: 143–149 (Ganguli 1982, 1990 8: 322–330); and *Panchatantra* 3 (Ryder 1925: 334–341).

16. Sahadeva, too, follows Krishna, even though Krishna had arranged for his father's death. Before Krishna leaves Magadha with Bhima and Arjuna, Sahadeva venerates him; and when the time of the Great War comes he aligns Magadha's great army not with his father's natural ally, Duryodhana, but with Jarasandha's natural enemy, Yudhishthira (*BP* 10. 73; van Buitenen 3: 219).

17. Kamsa and Jarasandha are at the center of the problem that has led the Ruler of Rulers to become Krishna and Balarama: Numerous asuras ruling in the guise of kings are oppressing Goddess Earth. In distress she takes the form of a cow and goes to Brahma, who takes her with devas to the shore of the Milk Ocean. He uses the *Rig Veda*'s "Praise of the Person" (*purusha-sukta*) to invoke the Lord of the Moving Universe, God of devas, and Virile Ape (*vrishakapi*). While in samadhi Brahma receives

a message: The Ruler of the Rulers of Multitudes will lighten earth's burden through his energy as Time. He will be born in Vasudeva's house and devis will be born there for his pleasure along with his unending portion of a thousand hoods, who will precede him. The Pervading Actor's blessed maya will continue to delude the moving universe even as she takes birth to await her Master's command (*BP* 10.1.17–25).

The *Purusha-sukta* is *Rig Veda* 10.90. The unusual title Virile Ape (*vrishakapi*) appears as the name of a friend of Indra's in *Rig Veda* 10.86, where male potency is an important theme. Vrishakapi appears to conflict with Indra's wife Indrani at a sacrifice. He is described as *harito mriga* (tawny wild beast), as *kapi* (ape), as *svapna-nashana* (sleep's destroyer), and as *pulvagho mriga* (evil-doing wild beast); see stanzas 3, 5, 21, and 22 in Wilson 1990: 6: 288–294). Except for kapi, these descriptions match a male lion: his color is tawny (*hari*), he destroys sleep by roaring during Brahma's hour before sunrise, and he is dangerous. Vishnu appears as a lion in *Rig Veda* 1.154: stanza one describes his acts of virya and his three strides, and stanza two describes his virya as a wild beast (*mriga*) ferociously wandering the mountains in whose three strides all worlds abide (see Wilson 1990: 2: 79–80). "Virile Ape" and "Thrice-striding Lion" point to Vishnu as Indra's friend (e.g., see *Rig Veda* 1.155–157; Wilson 1990: 2: 81–85).

18. *SB* 5.4.3.7: 19–21; *AB* 7.3; 8.2–4; Heesterman 1957: 64, 91–93, 127–139, 140–161.

19. Ganguli 1982, 1990 10: Shanti Parva, pp. 34–55; Anusasana Parva, pp. 11–14.

CHAPTER 10

1. *dakshinya-drishti-padavi* (*BP* 8.23.7). Tagare (1976–1979 3: 1112) and Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2: 388), respectively, translate the phrase, "are made the recipients of your gracious looks" and "have become the objects of Thy condescension." In the context of this panel on the south side, however, the literal meaning of the phrase is appropriate: "southern (*dakshinya*)—doctrine (*drishti*)—path (*padavi*)."

2. Tagare 1976–1979 (4: 1628, note 3) cited the commentator Sridhara Svami for that information.

3. The kalpatarus or panchavrikshas are called Mandara, Parijataka, Samtana, Kalpavriksha, and Harichandana (Monier-Williams 1964: 262c, s.v. *kalpa-taru*; 577b, s.v. *pancha-vriksha*).

4. *JS* 1.1–2. Sanjukta Gupta discusses the theology of these three in Gupta 1992.

5. According to Krishna in the "Narayaniya," the name Damodara refers to him, Hari, as heaven and earth and the space in between, whom people seek to attain by restraining their senses (Ganguli 1982, 1990 10: 153).

6. These occult powers (*vibhuti*) are 1) animan or becoming minute; 2) laghiman, or becoming extremely light; 3) prapti, or attaining or realizing anything; 4) prakamya, or irresitible will; 5) mahiman, or illimitable bulk; 6) ishita, or supreme dominion; 7) vashita, or subjugating by magic; and 8) kamavasayita, or supressing all desires (Monier-Williams 1964: s.v. *vibhuti*, 978c–979a.

7. Pradhana derives consciousness from him as her atman and because of him is able to act (*JS* 3.14; and Bhattacharya 1967 in *JS*: 24). Sanjukta Gupta identifies prakriti as a material emanation from Shakti (1992: 181–182).

8. Bhattacharyya 1967 summarizes *JS* 2.31–6.25 on pp. 16–26. Sanjukta Gupta observes that this theology conceives of ultimate reality as "two points of a swinging pendulum: on the one hand, the unpolarized Brahman and, on the other, the polarized God (Para Vasudeva) and His *shakti*. Sadhana concentrates on this *shakti* in the form of speech." The "unpolarized" *brahman*, she says, is a "state of conscious existence of ultimate reality even beyond the Nityodita state, where divine sovereignty and splendor remain unmanifest in the plenum (*brahman*) of pure consciousness that is conscious of nothing, not even itself." In contrast, the "polarized" Para Vasudeva with his Shakti has the six bhagas in full display; by means of his omnipotent Shakti as speech, "God is manifest as the godhead, Vasudeva, and is revealed to His own knowledge as such" (Gupta 1992: 184, 179).

9. Sanjukta Gupta 1992: 184 and 188: "the Vyuha Vasudeva and the transcendent Vasudeva basically are the same divinity and the awareness of the one leads automatically to the other. . . . After reaching the stage of worshipping Vyuha Vasudeva, the sadhaka automatically passes into the stage of Nityodita Vasudeva and attains mukti. *SS* [*Satvata-samhita*] asserts total identity between these two phases of Vasudeva; it gives only one mantra for both and calls it the mantra of the single formed deity (Vasudeva). This mantra is prescribed for both the renouncer-worshipper and the nonrenouncer-devotee of the system" (*SS* 13–42).

10. As Sanjukta Gupta explains (1922: 187–188), once the level of Aniruddha has been crossed in sadhana, the sadhaka no longer needs to perform external worship; and by attaining the vyuha Aniruddha goes beyond to the vyuha Vasudeva, who is identical to para Vasudeva.

11. *BG* 13.27–34. This reading assumes that *brahman* in 13.30 refers to Great *Brahman*'s pure creation, and that *param* in the concluding stanza 13.34 refers to Supreme *Brahman*, Krishna's "highest home" as para Vasudeva.

12. In the Shaiva Agama, that threefold tamas is represented by Tripura—"Three Cities"—an invisible vehicle in three parts made of gold, silver, and iron, respectively. Maya had built it for the asuras, who roamed in it throughout the universe, invisibly causing destruction. When the devas went to the Ruler, Rudra Shiva, for help, he shot Tripura and killed the asuras. Pallava Shaivas repeatedly sculpted that famous episode.

This famous Shaiva story is also told in the *Bhagavata Purana* (7.10.52–71). In the Bhagavata telling, however, Rudra Shiva's self-sufficient effort failed, for Maya dipped the dead asuras in a well of magical amrita liquid (*siddhamrtarasa*) contained inside Tripura and they revived, with vajra bodies and stronger than ever. Vishnu therefore took the form of a cow, and Brahma took the form of a calf; they entered Tripura and drank up the well. And then, drawing upon the potency (*shakti*) of his own righteousness (*dharma*), insight (*jnana*), renunciation (*virakti*), lordliness (*riddhi*), asceticism (*tapas*), knowledge (*vidya*), and ritual (*kriya*), Vishnu brought forth tejas in the form of a chariot, a charioteer, a flagstaff, horses, a bow, armor, arrows, and so forth. Only when Rudra Shiva used that mode of Vishnu's tejas could he eradicate Tripura for good. He did so at the eighth hour called "Victorious" (*abhijinmuhurta*), the

twenty-four minutes before and the twenty-four minutes after midday (Monier-Williams: 62). On the sanctum, midday is represented by the southeast corner, which we are now approaching. That story of Tripura repeats the meaning of this story of Indra and Bali on the Milk Ocean shore.

The Bhagavan's own brilliant conquering power born of mantra must eradicate darkened passion on behalf of the enlightened dimension; only then can the sadhaka's "Indra" defeat his "Bali." Yet the devas are not self-sufficient, for in the end, Indra gave up on his own vajra weapon and relied instead on foam. Presumably, the churning of the Milk Ocean had produced the foam. A version of the story in "The Great Romance" entitled "The Ocean of the Stream of Stories" (*Kathasaritsagara*), however, said the foam was from the Ganga River and that the vajra was hidden inside it. There Namuchi was a Danava who practiced the vow of perfection in giving. In the churning of the Milk Ocean he had received the horse Ucchaishravas. During the war with devas over the amrita, the horse restored slain asuras by smelling them. Indra therefore asked Namuchi for the horse, which, because of his vow, he could not refuse to give. Indra then lulled Namuchi into security and killed him with "foam of the Ganges, in which he had placed a thunderbolt."

The karmic fruit of Namuchi's perfection in giving led him to be reborn again through his mother, this time as the more powerful asura named Prabala (Powerful), still committed to the vow. After he had conquered Indra a hundred times, the devas asked Prabala to give his body as a human sacrifice, which he did, and they cut it to pieces. Due to the karmic fruit of that self-giving act, he was born this time as the man named Prabhasa (Glittering). Prabhasa entered a cave in the mountain Chandrapada, which connects to the lowest underworld, Patala. After descending to Patala, he brought up wealth and asura warriors to aid the hero Suryaprabha (Somadeva Bhatta 1: 444–446). This telling of the story matches the theme of the south side exactly, including "Glittering" (Prabhasa), the name of the place where the Yadavas destroyed themselves and the Kali Yuga began. Perhaps Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan were among the asuras Prabhasa brought up from Patala.

13. For a discussion of Sudarshana, see chapter 15.

14. In the rajasuya, the conclusion comes only after the goat of the soma sacrifice has been slain and the newly engendered king and queen have taken the concluding bath. That concluding goat sacrifice may be the ritual basis for the story of Krishna decapitating Shishupala.

PART III INTRODUCTION

1. Raghunathan (1976 1: 476) said the elephants stand beyond the Lokaloka mountain, while Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2: 87) said they stand on the four sides of the mountain. The latter makes more sense.

2. The occupants of atmosphere below Dhruva exist in the descending order of the stars of the Seven Seers, the five planets, the twenty-seven constellations (*nakshatra*), Moon, and Sun (*BP* 5.20–22; 5.23.1–3). For the story of Dhruva, see *BP* 4.8–12.

3. See also *Puranic Encyclopaedia* 2002: 456. According to the *Vishnu Purana*, the inhabitants of Maharloka move upward at the time of the periodical dissolu-

tion; that realm is not destroyed, but neither is it inhabited. Janaloka above is where Brahma's sons known as the four Kumaras dwell. Tapoloka above that is inhabited by ascetics not consumed by their ascetic "heat" (*tapas*). Finally, Satyaloka, the world of true being (*satya*), lasts as long as Brahma does, because it is his most subtle bodily mode. See the notes by H. H. Wilson [1840] 1961: 175–176.

4. Because humans live south of Meru and Dhruva we therefore perceive Sun's movement and Dhruva's realm as to the north. Aruna drives Sun's chariot, using the seven Vedic meters as horses. Aruna sits in the front of the chariot, but faces toward Surya the Sun (*BP* 5.21.15–16).

5. See Tayapsyananda's illustration, 1980–1982 2: facing 63.

6. Bhutam used the word *totarntu* to convey the sense that the order was a traditional sequence; I have translated it as "seek out," but it also means "to continue in unbroken succession" and "to succeed each other." The verse implies that every day the Bhagavan is worshiped first by Sun, then by Brahma in the Lotus, and then by Shiva. Since those deities are all transformations of the Bhagavan himself, that sequence portrays his daily contemplation of himself at his "center." That visual contemplation is what worshipers like Bhutam sought to experience at their "center" (*hridaya*, *nenchu*).

CHAPTER 11

1. According to Maitreya, when Indra produced the imposters (*pakhanda*), who were naked (Jaina shramanas), red-robed (Buddhist shramanas), and others (Kapalikas), he did so while holding a skull and a khatvanga (4.19.20–25), which suggests that they also used it in some rites.

2. This translation is based on those of Minakshi 1941: 33–38, and 54–55, and of Mahalingam 1969: 139–155. The original complete text is found in *SII* 4: 10–12.

3. Kalikanri's description of the khatvanga is *vita-vel-koti-verpatai*. C. Minakshi (1977: 55) interpreted *vita* to be *vitai* (bull) and translated the phrase to mean, "triumphant bull-banner and the spear weapon." If we keep Kalikanri's form *vita*, however, we may interpret it differently. Guided by Alex Wayman's discussion of the khatvanga (1973: 122–126), I read the phrase to mean "a banner resembling the spinal column raised on a spear," which was the khatvanga Pallavamalla received at his anointing as Nandivarman. Support is found in the explanation of *vita* in the *Tamil Lexicon*, and of the related *vittam* of *Tirumantiram* 2904 as explained by P. Iramanata Pillai and A. Citamparanar (verse 2863 in their edition). *Vittam* in that stanza denotes the sushumna column in the subtle body. Since the sushumna runs parallel to the spinal column in the gross body, and since the khatvanga topped by a skull resembles the spinal column, I have translated *vitam* as "spinal column."

4. *Ahirbudhnya-samhita* 28.18ab, discussed by Rastelli 2002/2003: 427–429 and Rastelli 2005: 127.

5. We live in the Varaha Kalpa, at the beginning of the second half of Brahma's lifespan, in the seventh of fourteen manvantaras that constitute his active waking

day from about 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. In other words, the span of our ruling Manu is close to noon on the first day of Brahma's fifty-first year.

6. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 1: 193) identified them, respectively, as "feeling of total loss of oneself in the loss of objects of enjoyment"; "anger at the obstruction to enjoyments"; "keen desire for enjoyments"; "the association of the sense of 'I' with the body"; and "not having knowledge of one's own nature." Goswami (1995 1: 183) identified them respectively as "looking upon death as one's own end"; "anger"; "the craving for enjoyment"; "self-identification with the body etc."; and "ignorance about one's own self." Both translators reversed the sequence given in the Sanskrit text.

7. This description of Brahma's body is the paradigm for all humanoid bodies. It explains the position of the vastu purusha or "person of the place," who fills the mandala on which the vimana will be built under acharya supervision. This person of the place, according to one Pancharatra tradition, is a being of insurmountable strength born from the sweat of the Bhargava Shukra, the acharya to asuras. Devas defeated him and threw him out of heaven and he now lies on the earth face down. Builders (*shilpin*) hired to construct the temple offer a blood sacrifice of mutton in the vastu purusha mandala; only after purificatory rites have been performed does the acharya begin the liturgical and building activities he is to supervise (Smith 1963: 13–14).

Since the vastu purusha lies face down inside the square mandala and we know that his anus is identified with Nirriti at its southwest corner, we may assume that his spine lies on the diagonal of the southwest and northeast corners. His legs are crossed in the southwest, his head is in the northeast, and his torso and arms fill the remainder. His right (*uttara*) side is on the east and his left (*dakshina*) side is on the west. This explains the placement of the sun's *dakshinayana* and *uttarayana* on the mandala.

The sun's journey northward (*uttarayana*) begins with the winter solstice at the northeast corner. It moves from the top of the vastu purusha's head down his right (*uttara*) side to his anus at the southwest corner. From there the sun begins his southward journey (*dakshinayana*) at the summer solstice. It moves clockwise up the vastu purusha's left (*dakshina*) side and back to the top of his head.

8. Shasta is also used to refer to the Shakyamuni Buddha and to Aiyanar, born to Shiva and to Vishnu in the form of the courtesan Mohini, therefore known as "Son of Vishnu and Shiva" (Hariharaputra). That Shasta protects human settlements. Since the common element shared by those three modes of Shasta is that they appear in the Kali Yuga—Shakyamuni Buddha at its beginning, Aiyanar now, and Kalki in the future—Shasta denotes that shared identity. *Shasta* is the nominative singular of *shastri*, meaning "he who chastises or punishes; rules or commands; or teaches or instructs." From the Bhagavata point of view, all three chastise evil beings during the Kali Yuga.

9. [The word *anrita* is defined by Monier-Williams 1964 as "not true; false." It is not clear where "chaotic" came from. —ed.]

10. The word *uttamashloka* as used here may only mean "the one of supeme glory," but the context suggests that it specifically means "the supreme stanza" and refers to Krishna as the one who spoke *Bhagavad-gita* 18.66.

CHAPTER 12

1. [Had he lived, Dennis Hudson would undoubtedly have added more commentary to the material in this chapter. At present, some of the panels lack "The Panel's Meanings" sections, and there is no conclusion. —ed.]

2. The story of Daksha's rebirth is told twice and relates Soma the Moon of the south side to Brahma of the north side. In one telling (*BP* 4.30), the ten Pracheta brothers emerged from waters in which they had worshiped Vasudeva for ten thousand years with the *Rudra-gita*. Enraged at the trees that in the meantime had covered the ground, they released fire to burn them until Brahma appeared and pacified them. The remaining trees gave their adopted daughter, born of the seer Kandu and an apsaras, to the ten brothers as a shared wife, and through her Daksha was reborn. Abandoned by the apsaras when she returned to heaven, she had been raised by the trees as their daughter, and Soma the Moon, ruler of vegetation, had fed her with nectar she sucked from his finger. In the other telling (*BP* 6.4), it was Soma the Moon who appeared to the brothers to stop their burning the trees and gave them the trees' daughter Marisha as wife. She was, again, born of an apsaras. Soma the Moon depicted in the first panel on the south-facing side of the vimana (Panel S1) connects those two tellings; and as we shall see in chapter 15, Soma the Moon was himself the rebirth of Brahma through Atri.

3. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 1: 39) interpreted *vyupashritam . . . yoga-kaksham* simply as "established on the way of Yoga," and Tagare (1976–1979 2: 451) as "who wore a *Yoga-kaksha* (a strap to secure the position of the left knee)." It appears to me, however, to mean "without recourse (*vi-upashrita*) to the belt for Yoga (*yoga-kaksha*)." Compare the figure identified as Markandeya in Panel N5.

4. D. L. Lorenzen (1972: 11) quoted the *Kurma Purana* in which Shiva declared the Vama, Pasupata, Soma, Langal, and Bhairava systems (*shastra*) to be opposed to Veda and not to be served. R. A. Dunuwila (1985: 49; 55–56) cited R. C. Hazra's analysis of the *Kurma Purana* as a Pancharatra document of 550–650 that received a second version from the Pashupatas 700–800. The later version condemned non-Vedic shastras as heretical (*pasanda*). The Shaiva Agamas of 700–800 placed the Kapalika, Kalamukha, and Aghora sects on the "left hand."

5. That position matches the design of the temple: If one sits on the circumambulatory west of the vimana and faces northeast, one faces the panel of Boar teaching Brahma, which includes the story of Matsya the Fish.

6. The Vajasani recension of *Yajur Veda* (*BP* 12.6.66–72 and Tapasyananda 1980–1982 4:189–190).

7. In the horse sacrifice (*ashvamedha* or *hayamedha*), the victim was identified with Sun and allowed to wander unimpeded for a solar year. Strangled on the second day of the sacrifice, the Sun-horse ritually impregnated the queen to beget a vigorous heir to the throne (*Rig Veda* 1.162–163; Sen 1982: 43–44). The body was then dismembered and offered into the fire. The sattra is a type of soma sacrifice modeled on the twelve-day soma rite that has six soma days as its principal feature. In theory, the sattra may last up to a year or one hundred years (Sen 1982: 115).

8. *Visnudharmottara Purana* 3.73.42–43 and 48; and Shah 1961: 158. Due to textual corruption, Stella Kramrisch (1928: 98) translated "face of a horse [*ashva*]" as "face of a dog [*svan*]"; Pratapaditya Pal (1975–1976) corrected it.

9. Tagare (1976–1979) noted that in 3: 1121. Sridhara Svamin, who appears to have been in the parampara of Chitsukha (1220–1284), is thought to have lived in the mid-fourteenth century (Shastri 1999: ix).

CHAPTER 13

1. The shaktis are the twenty-five categories (*tattva*) of samkhya: the "four" (prakriti, purusha, mahat, and ahamkara); the "sixteen" (mind, ten cognitive and conative sense-organs, the five elements) and the "five" (*tanmatra*: sound, touch, shape [sight], taste, and smell).

2. The Chitraketu story divides into two parts corresponding to this north-facing side and to the opposite south-facing side on the middle sanctum. Part One: Chitraketu was an emperor near Mathura who had no son until Angiras, son of Brahma, gave him one. The child was poisoned by his other wives and, while he was mourning, Angiras and Narada appeared and instructed him about death. Narada taught him a mantra that gives the experience of Samkarshana. After fourteen days, Chitraketu became leader of the vidyaharas, and after twenty-one, he saw Adishesha and sang a hymn to him. In response, Samkarshana taught him and consoled him, as this panel illustrates (*BP* 6.16.50–64). Part Two: After many years, Chitraketu was cursed by Parvati to become an asura for insulting Shiva. He was born as Vritra through the southern fire of the deva Tvashta, who sacrificed in it to create an agent who would destroy Indra, because Indra had killed his son Vishvarupa (*BP* 6.9). Vritra emerged from Tvashta's mantra as a huge and hideous asura (*BP* 6.9.11–18), who nevertheless remembered and loved Samkarshana (*BP* 6.11.21). Indra, who was protected by the Narayana-kavacha mantra of the *Atharva Veda* (*BP* 6.8; 6.9.53), slew Vritra (*BP* 6.9–12), but then, because he had killed Vishvarupa, was pursued by brahmahatya, "the sin of slaying a Brahmin" (*BP* 6.13).

3. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2: 78) interpreted it here to mean two people, Nara and Narayana, but the mantra Narada addressed to him (*BP* 5.19.11) makes it clear that he is the single "seer of seers and supreme guru of paramahamsas." When the single Naranarayana produces the dual Nara and Narayana, the role of paramahamsa will be played by Nara and the role of guru by Narayana.

4. Both Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2:78) and Tagare (1976–1979 2:732) interpret *bhagavad-anubhava-upavarnana* (delineation of the experience of the Bhagavan) in *BP* 5.19.10 to mean the Pancharatra. The reason will be clear in the story of Narada.

5. The yama and niyama of Patanjali's Yoga, the classical system, are the discipline that leads to enstatic consciousness (*samadhi*), the first two in a series of eight techniques. The remaining six discipline the body and mind while sitting in the proper posture (*asana*). According to Mircea Eliade, Patanajli's five yamas (restraints) are not killing (*ahimsa*), not lying (*satya*), not stealing (*asteya*), sexual abstinence (*brahmacarya*), and not being avaricious (*aparigraha*). His five niyama (disciplines) are cleanliness (*sauca*), serenity (*samtosa*), asceticism (*tapas*), the study of yoga metaphysics, and the effort to make Ishvara the motive of all actions (Eliade 1958: 48–49).

According to Krishna in "The Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" (*BP* 11.19.33–35), the yama and niyama of his Dharma differ and have to with the life of his devotee. His twelve yamas are minimal disciplines that apply to householders and ascetics: not

killing (*ahimsa*), not lying (*satya*), not stealing (*asteya*), not clinging (*asanga*), modesty (*hri*), not hoarding (*asamchaya*), affirmation of Veda (*astikya*), sexual abstinence (*brahmacharya*), moderation in speech (*mauna*), constancy (*sthairya*), forgiveness (*kshama*), and freedom from anxiety (*abhaya*). His eleven niyamas apply to the Bhagavata consecrated by Pancharatra diksha: purification, uttering mantras to oneself, asceticism, oblations in the Vedic fire, faith, hospitality to the worthy, homage to Krishna, visits to tirthas, serving others, satisfaction, and serving the acharya.

6. For the secret, more secret, and most secret knowledge, see Tagare (1976–1979 1: 47 n 217).

7. Following Tagare (1976–1979 1: 48 v 32), the miseries are those caused by oneself (*adhyatmika*), those caused by the devas (*adhidaivika*), and those caused by the demons and animals (*adhibhautika*).

8. The origin parallels the origin of the asuras from Brahma's seminal emission. See the discussion of Panel E3 in chapter 14.

9. Narada's knowledge of Pancharatra theology derives from the *Pancharatra Upanishad* taught to him by the Unobstructed on White Island in the Ocean of Milk at the beginning of our kalpa. That story appears in the Narayaniya section of the *Mahabharata* as one of many things Bhishma taught Yudhishthira before Bhishma died after the winter solstice (*BP* 1.9.25–28). See K. M. Ganguli's translation (Ganguli 1982, 1990 10: 114–217) with reference to the critical edition. In the critical edition, the Narayaniya is Shanti Parva 321–353; in the Ganguli translation, it is Shanti Parva 335–365.

10. J. Gonda dated the *Satvata-samhita* to the sixth century or earlier in his "Introduction" to Smith 1980. In volume one (Smith 1975: 513), Smith had noted that Utpala (ninth to tenth century) cited the *Satvata-samhita* as an authoritative work in his *Spandapradipika*. He also observed (1975: 67) that in later tradition the *Satvata-samhita* is associated with Melkote, the *Paushkara-samhita* with Sri Rangam, and the *Jayakhya-samhita* with Kanchipuram. Those three shastras constitute the authoritative "Three Gems" of the Pancharatra. According to the last, the *Satvata-samhita*, "the root of all the Vedas," gave rise to the *Ishvara-samhita* (Smith 1975: 68), which Smith dated "in the neighbourhood of the tenth century" (Smith 1975: 85).

11. According to Smith's summary, the *Satvata-samhita* itself does not make the distinction between svarthapuja and pararthapuja, though it is clearly implied. The distinction is explicit, however, in the derivative *Ishvara-samhita* (21.511–558).

12. In *Bhagavad-gita* 15.3 the axe that cuts the root of the asvattha tree of samsara is nonclinging (*asanga*).

13. In *BP* 3.32 Kapila described different kinds of devotees: 1) the householders who worship devas and ancestors and go by the path of Moon to the world he rules and are then reborn; 2) the wise who observe their own dharma (*svadharma*), practice the dharma of nonprocreation (*nivritti-dharma*), and go by the path of Sun to Brahma's Satyaloka and live there as long as he lives, but are reborn when he is reborn; 3) the ritualists who desire the fruits of ritual and go to the world of Ancestors ruled by Aryaman; and 4) those who practice the discipline of devotion to the Vasudeva and quickly attain renunciation, knowledge, and the vision of *brahman*. See also *BP* 11.2.44–55.

14. Her wonder echoes Yashoda's wonder when nursing the infant Krishna (*BP* 10.7.34–37) and when he ate mud (*BP* 10.8.32–45).

15. As Tagare explained (1976–1979 3: 1165 n 6), the story accounts for the manner of dress and tonsure of warrior peoples in the northwest who were not ethnically of Bharata. According to his translation, "some were got clean-shaven, some were left with beards and moustaches only (with no hair on the head); some had only hair on the head (but with clean-shaven face); some had only half-shaven heads; some were made to remove the under-garment, while others, the upper-garment" (*BP* 9.8.5–7).

16. Tagare was less clear. He said *shruti* means "direct expression (from the Vedas in eulogies etc.)" and *artha* means "direct expression . . . by way of purport (by episodes containing it)." He also noted that the commentator Viraraghava combined the two words to mean "as actually described in authoritative books or Vedas" (Tagare 1976–1979 1: 211 and n 594).

17. The emergence of Urvashi from Narayana and Nara at Badari is illustrated beautifully by the east-facing panel of the remaining sixth-century sanctum of the Vishnu-house at Deogarh (Hudson 1991).

18. Hamsa, literally "goose," denotes the disciple's consciousness "I (*aham*) am he (*sah*)," which repeated as a mantra becomes hamsa. The name plays with the identity of Nara with Narayana as differentiated (*vishishta*) modes of the single Narayana.

19. Goddess Shri and Goddess Bhu, respectively the pure (*sattvika*) and the passionate (*rajasika*) modes of Shakti, sit inside the palace in its inner apartment on the middle floor while their husband sleeps under the power of Yoganidra, the delusive (*tamasika*) mode of Shakti. At the same time, Yoganidra's tejas protects that inner realm and the entire palace from any demonic defilement attracted to it.

Since Chandika Durga protects the "skin, bones, and flesh" of God's body, we may understand why in her form as Auspicious Kali (Bhadrakali) she delights in human flesh and blood. Bharata, the son of Rishabha discussed in the previous chapter, was himself the proposed victim for such a sacrifice to Bhadrakali at her shrine. But the tejas emanating from his body stimulated Bhadrakali to emerge from her icon, seize the sword that was to behead him, and slay the sponsors of the rite; she then drank their blood and kicked their heads, dancing and singing all the while (*BP* 5.9.12–20). Bhagavatas, it appears, did not deny Bhadrakali's taste, but following Bharata's lead did not consider it their dharma to feed people to her.

20. K. R. Srinivasan identified this panel as "Vishnu as Siva's teacher" (*EITA* 1.1 Text: 72), and there is a resemblance between the male standing here and Shiva standing on the east side (Panel E6). But the standing male is the ascetic Nara. The seated figure under the platform resembles a description of Shiva sitting under the banyan tree on Kailasa (*BP* 4.6.38–39a), but it depicts the seer Markandeya. Nevertheless, Shiva is implied, because Markandeya was a noted devotee of Shiva and the panel may intend to portray him as a Shaiva.

21. She appears as Kamakshi in Chivananachuvami, *Kancipuranam* 53; and as Lalita in the Purana called the *Lalita-mahatmya*. For the history of the two shrines of the Goddess at the center of the city, see Venkataraman 1968.

CHAPTER 14

1. The story of Bhairava is told from a Shaiva perspective in *Shiva Purana*: *Satarudra-samhita*: 8–9.

2. For the Shaiva version of the story of Kama and Shiva, see *Shiva Purana*: *Rudra-samhita* 1: 8–9; and *Rudra-samhita* 3: 17–19.

3. See Zimmer 1955 2: plates 290–293; and Rajeswari 1988, figures 70–72.

4. Tamils celebrate the winter solstice (*makara samkranti*) with a festival honoring Indra for having brought the rains and honoring Sun for beginning the light half of the year. Today the festival is called Ponkal, the "boiling over" of milk-rice. The precession of the equinoxes, however, has changed the pattern, and Ponkal and the solstice are now celebrated about twenty-three days after the actual solstice; the northeast monsoon falls in Aippachi and Karttikai and ends near the beginning of Markali. Except in ancient poetry, the original association of Markali (Margashirsha) with the northeast monsoon is forgotten and its completion is now associated with Karttikai.

5. If the child were carried the full term of ten moons, conception on the Pankuni full moon, for example, would result in a birth ten moons later on the full moon of Tai, the "sunrise" month of the uttarayana or "daylight" of the year. Death during the dakshinayana or "nighttime" of the year is inauspicious, and the same is presumably true for birth.

CHAPTER 15

1. In a list of twenty-three lila avataras, Dattatreya is the sixth, and he taught Alarka, Prahlada, and others about the atman (*BP* 1.3.11). According to the Prahlada story, Narada taught Prahlada, and Dattatreya is not mentioned (*BP* 7.7.1–16).

2. His location, the mountain range Riksha, is the eastern part of the Vindhya range, from the Bay of Bengal to the sources of the Narmada and Sona rivers, including the mountains of Chotanagpur and Gondwana, in which the Mahanadi River rises (Tagare 1976–1979 2: 423 n 3; and Dey 1984: 141 and map).

3. Akrura made a similar correspondence between the vyuhas and the components of the macrocosm and microcosm in his prayer in the Yamuna River portrayed on the middle floor's east-facing side (Panel 12).

4. An inscription in a temple at Mandagapattu in the Villupuram Taluk of South Arcot District records a Shaiva version of the trimurti in the order Brahma-Shiva-Vishnu. King Vichitrachitta (ca. 580–630), known also as Mahendravarma I, had enshrined their stone icons in three niches at the south end of a north-facing temple built without bricks, timber, metal, or mortar (Joshi 1965: 78; Longhurst 1924: 15–16; *EITA* 1.1 Text: 23). An inscription dated 973 found at Kurda in the Deccan invokes the trimurti with their wives; it compares them to the wish-giving Kalpataru tree and their wives to creepers encircling it. There the order appears to have been Vishnu-Brahma-Shiva, which, with Brahma in the center, suggests a Jaina temple. The inscription mentions Dantidurga as the dynasty's first king, perhaps Nandivarman's Rashtrakuta father-in-law or a predecessor (Joshi 1965: 79).

5. Bharata is the region of earth noted for ritual action (*karma bhumi*), and its suffering inhabitants live at the crossroads of the endless war between devas and asuras and use prayoga rites for protection. Prayoga rites arise from the Beautiful or Handsome Wheel (*sudarshana chakra*), which the Bhagavan holds in his back right hand. Sudarshana is discussed further below.

6. According to the story about the asura Namuchi reborn as Prabala and then as Prabhasa, a cave in "Moon's Realm" (Chandrapada) connected Earth to Patala. Asuras emerged from it to do battle, which explains why the asura Kali became dominant at Krishna's "death"; he emerged with the asuras from the cave at Prabhasa (see Tawney 1968 1: 444–446).

7. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 2: 333) said only asuras prepared themselves, but the text implies both devas and asuras, as noted by Tagare (1976–1979 3: 1045–1046).

8. *BP* 5.24.1–3 refutes the idea that Rahu swallows Sun and Moon each time and that they pass out though his neck because it no longer has an attached body.

9. For the conclusion of the story, see chapter 10 (Panel 20).

10. Panel 19 above on the middle floor denotes the western half of the vimana's south side as Madhusudana's "place" of Aniruddha's shakti.

11. The correspondence of the twelve murtis with the twelve Tamil months and the twelve divisions of day and night (*ahoratra*) is this:

(1) Keshava is Markali and 4–6 a.m. (Brahmamuhurta–night's end)
(2) Narayana is Tai and 6–8 a.m. (sunrise)
(3) Madhava is Machi and 8–10 a.m. (mid-morning)
(4) Govinda is Pankuni and 10 a.m.–12 m. (late morning)
(5) Vishnu is Chittirai and 12–2 p.m. (early afternoon)
(6) Madhusudana is Vaikachi and 2–4 p.m. (mid-afternoon)
(7) Trivikrama is Ani and 4–6 p.m. (evening)
(8) Vamana is Ati and 6–8 p.m. (sunset)
(9) Shridhara is Avani and 8–10 p.m. (early night)
(10) Hrisikesha is Purattachi and 10 p.m.–12 m. (midnight)
(11) Padmanabha is Aippachi and 12–2 a.m. (late night)
(12) Damodara is Karttikai and 2–4 a.m. (night's penultimate hour)

12. Mohini appeared to Shiva playing ball in the way Twilight played ball before the asuras (*BP* 3.20.35–36; Tapasyananda 1980–1982 1: 234).

13. [Dennis Hudson implies, but offers no evidence, that similar ceremonies were performed in the eighth century. —ed.]

14. [The *Brihatkathasaritsagara* is translated by van Buitenen (1959: 1) as "Ocean of the Rivers of the Great Romance." —ed.]

15. After the Mantrasiddhanta Path came the Agamasiddhanta Path (focusing on a standing vyuha form and open to various castes), the Tantrasiddhanta Path (using the navapadma-mandala and open to members of all four ritual classes who employ the sacraments), and the Tantrantarasiddhanta Path (using the chakrabja-mandala, pot, icon, and fire, and open to members of all four ritual classes who employ the sacraments).

16. In *BP* 3.7.29–30, Vidura asked Maitreya to teach him about varna and ashrama, about the births, and acts, etc., of seers, about the divisions of Veda, about the details of yajna, about the path of yoga, and about the tantra pertaining to non-action and to metaphysical analysis that focuses on the Bhagavan.

17. *The Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* and the Institut Française d'Indologie at Pondicherry indentified it as the Buddha. For a similar portrayal, see the standing Buddha in cave no. 19 at Ajanta in Gupte and Mahajan 1962: plate XLV.

18. See, for example, Parshvanatha in cave no. 32 at Ellora in Gupte and Mahajan 1962: plate CXLII.

19. Krishna described an avadhuta wearing a loincloth whose story resembles the Jaina story of Mahavira, but the content of his gatha reminds one of the Buddhist bhikshu's focus on the mind (*manas*) as the source of pleasure, pain, and the wheel of *samsara* (*BP* 11.23). Tagare (1976–1979 V: 2064) said he was nude, but *BP* 11.23.34 says he wore bark cloth and rags, which people pulled at. His prayer began like a Buddhist meditation in *BP* 11.23.43: The mind (*manas*) is the cause of sukha-dukha and is the supreme cause of the turning of the wheel of samsara (repeated again in *BP* 11.23.60).

20. For Shuka and the *Bhagavata Purana*, see 1.2.2–4; 1.3.40–45; 1.4.4–8; 1.7.8–11; and 2.1.8–10.

21. Buddhists were also seen to share a use of deceit to attain goals. Nearly a millennium after Nandivarman built the temple, the Tibetan historian Taranatha wrote about Madhyamati, who lived sometime between the spread of Mahayana and the appearance of Dharmakirti: "Then, there was the lay-disciple (*upasaka*) called the venerable (*bhattaraka*) Madhyamati. He used to go to the heretics (*tirthikas*) in their guise and, to start with, used to preach them their own scriptures. In the course of this, he surreptitiously preached the doctrine of non-self (*anatma*) and the method of the path of great compassion (*maha-karuna-marga-krama*). Thus their views were gradually changed without their being aware of it. In this way, he converted them into Buddhists. Since he could assume various forms simultaneously, he managed to lead about ten thousand heretics (*tirthikas*) to the Law of the Buddha" (Taranatha 1970: 337–338). (I have revised the passage by translating the Sanskrit terms and placing them in parentheses. The story appears in Taranatha's chapter on the doctrine in the south, by which he meant the triangular peninsula down to Rameshvaram. He described Kanchi and Kalinga on the east coast, and regions on the west coast, in Karnataka, and in the Vindhyas. Buddhist shrines were present, he said, in cities down to present-day Kanyakumari.)

Madhyamati's ability to assume multiple forms simultaneously means he was a bodhisattva using skill in means (*upaya*) to win over followers of Bhagavata and Shaiva Agama (*tirthika*).

22. Writing in 1608 in Tibet, Taranatha recorded a Buddhst story about "The Hill of the Sacred Kites" (Tirukkalukkunram) near Kanchipuram: "During the period of Suklaraja and Candrasobha—the kings of Kanci in the south—the Garuda and other common birds of the small island were brought under control and these birds used to bring medicine, gems and various marine creatures. With these treasures, each of the kings worshipped two thousand monks. A temple was later built for the birds and it was called the Pankhi-tirtha temple, where a few birds from the small island still come and live" (Taranatha 1970: 334). The word *pankhi* is the same as *paksin* in

Sanskrit, *pakki* in Tamil, and *pakkhin* in Pali, all meaning "bird." In Tamil, *kalu* can denote the kite or garuda. Birds are still fed as an act of worship at the "Hill of the Kite" (Kalukkunram) (see Dey 1984: 144).

23. L. M. Joshi, *JOI* 16.3 (March 1967): 223–232, cited by Nakamura 1987: 314.

24. According to Nakamura (1987: 338), the idea of shakti was introduced from Tantrism into the Vajrayana or Mantrayana. A Buddhist text revealing Tara's nature as Shakti portrayed a scene that resembles the scene of Brahma and the lotus on the mountain Manasottara in the seventh continent as depicted on the east-facing side (Panel E1). In the Buddhist scene, Avalokiteshvara rather than Brahma sits in the lotus, and he dwells on the mountain Potalaka rather than on Manasottara. But like Brahma, Avalokiteshvara is in the company of Hayagriva, kinnaras, gandharvas, and various goddesses to whom he teaches Dharma. Vajrapani, a yaksha resembling Indra, approaches Avakoliteshvara and asks how beings may be saved from birth and death. The answer is through Tara the Rescuer, conceptually identical to Shakti. Actually it was Amitabha "the Protector" who revealed the answer, because he spoke through Avalokiteshvara. In the *Ahirbhudnya-samhita*, Sudarshana parallels Amitabha as the protector manifesting Shakti. See *Arya-tara* 35–40, in Conze et al. 1964: 196–202.

25. For this quote and discussion, see Beyer 1978: 6–8.

26. Beyer 1978: 7–8. Beyer also noted that Hsuan Tsang, who visited Kanchipuram in the mid-seventh century, reported two images of *to-lo* near Nalanda, whom he identified as Tara. One of them was in its own temple and a popular object of worship.

27. Goda (Antal) addressed the conch as Krishna's lover who tasted the nectar of his mouth in *Nacciyar Tirumoli* 7.

28. Brahma's yoga system appears to comprise the four liturgical paths (*marga*) listed in *Padma-samhita* 21 in hierarchical order (see note 15 above). The Buddha and the Jina are treated further in *Shandilya-samhita* 14 (Smith 1975: 432–433). See also Smith 1980: 113.

29. Tagare, in his note to *BP* 7.9.10 (1976–1979 3: 943 n 1), said that Prahlada as prapanna is the interpretation of the verse by the Ramanuja school of theology. But Prahlada refers to himself as a prapanna in *BP* 7.9.22, and Narasimha declares him a model devotee in *BP* 7.10.14 and 21.

30. See also *BP* 3.11.36, and 3.17: Man-lion and Boar appeared at the beginning of the second half of the present Brahma's life, during the rule of the first manu, Svayambhuva.

31. Shiva told Parvati about that mantra while they were on Kailasa in a teaching known variously as the "Man-lion Ceremony of Majestic Sudarsana" (*shrisudarshana-nrisimha-kalpa*), or as "The Ceremony of Man-lion" (*nrisimhakalpa*), or as "The Samhita of the Ruler Shiva" (*ishvarasamhita*), or simply as the Pancharatra (Smith 1975: 87). It teaches the usefulness of the anustubh mantra to all ritual classes including Shudras. Moreover, two upanishads expound the exoteric and exoteric meanings of that "king of mantra" (*mantraraja*), the *Nrisimha-purva-tapaniya Upanishad* and the *Nrisimha-uttara-tapaniya Upanishad* (Deussen 1980: 809–858). Prahlada's long prayer, the "Man-lion Ceremony of Majestic Sudarshana" and those two Upanishads thus belong together.

32. According to *SS* 19.36–38, at the beginning of the second stage of the vibhava-diksha, the acharya places his hand on the sadhaka sitting in the mandala and recites purifying mantras; Smith 1975: 529). The vishnuhasta is also used to signify the acceptance of a disciple by a guru (*JS* I.40–69 and Smith 1975: 114). The same gesture is used when a man is consecrated to the status of acharya (*JS* 18.82b–86a and Smith 1975:123).

33. Appropriately, the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha is depicted in the realm of the subtle above on the middle-floor sanctum (Panel 19) and Hayagriva and Brahma are depicted in the realm of the gross body on the north side's bottom floor (Panels NP1 and NP4).

34. Prahlada's request reveals that the metaphor of king and subject, or master and servant, breaks down when applied to the relation of the Bhagavan and devotee: Unlike the usual master and servant, Vasudeva and devotee relate to one another out of love, not out of a practical sense of self-interest. Goda (Antal) made that same request through her vision of gopis standing before Govinda in *Tiruppavai* 29.

35. In the Sudarshana chakra mandala, the pranava *Om* in the nave of the wheel is the sign "that carries across," the taraka; with it are Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesvara. Around it in concentric circles are the six-syllable Sudarshana-mantra (*Om namas chakraya*); the eight-syllable Narayanam (*Om namo Narayanaya*); the twelve-syllable Vasudevam (*Om namo bhagavate Vasudevaya*); the sixteen first letters of the alphabet (fourteen vowels and the anusvara and visarga); and the thirty-two-syllable Nrisimhanustubh-mantra. The four Vedas are its spokes and maya surrounds it, within which the Vasus are to the east, the Rudras to the south, the Adityas to the west, the Vishvadevas to the north, and the sun and moon on the sides (see the diagram in Deussen 1980: 830a).

36. The region of northern Kuru is described in *BP* 5.19.34–39. The story of Boar is told in *BP* 3.13 and 3.18–19.

37. According to *BP* 5.24.30, Panis are the offspring of Diti and Danu, the two wives of Kashyapa, and are divided into three divisions, all enemies of devas. They live like snakes in holes, only Sudarshana supresses their arrogance, and they especially fear Veda chanted by Sarama, the female dog who is Indra's messenger; that alludes to a *Rig Veda* legend of a curse Sarama set on the Panis (Tagare 1976–1979 2: 761 n 254).

38. Tapasyananda (1980–1982 1: 222–223) identified Varuna as the "Lord of Patala" but that is not in the text. He is called *asura-loka-palaka*, "protector of the asura world." See Tagare's translation of this verse (which in his edition is 3.17.27) in 1976–1979 2: 319.

39. The abhijinmuhurta (hour of victory) is the twenty-four minutes before and twenty-four minutes after midday. In the calendar of the year, midday denotes the transition from the month of Pankuni to the month of Chittirai, which is the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. In the manvantara, it is the transition of morning to afternoon in Brahma's daytime at the beginning of the present kalpa (*BP* 3.18.26–27).

40. Boar's indentity with yajna is made even more explicit in the hymn seers sing to Boar in *BP* 3.13.34–45.

41. Following Agama thought, the Pancharatra's mantrashastra is a brahma-upanishad and its followers worship the supreme Vasudeva. The Shakti of the

supreme Vasudeva is the shabdabrahman or shabdashakti, the *brahman* or shakti that is sound. Through the sound of Shakti, Vasudeva revealed the mantras of Veda and the mantrashastra of Agama.

42. This discussion is based on Gupta 1989: 240–242. Gupta and Smith seem to make contradictory statements regarding the use of mantras by non-Brahmins according to the *Satvata-samhita*. Summarizing 2.1–12, Smith said, "Bhagavan says that the four *Vyuhas* of the Lord may be worshipped by means of *mantras*, which *mantras* are normally only for brahmin's use but which, after (Pancaratra) initiation, may be employed by any devotee of any class-origin" (Smith 1975: 516). Gupta said, "Again, driven by *Brahmanical* orthodoxy, the SS allows only the *brahmana* initiate to worship the *vyuha* gods with their mantras. Others (the *ksatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra*) are not initiated in the *vyuha* mantras. But, if they are totally self-surrendering devotees, they may worship the *vyuha* gods without their mantras" (Gupta 1989: 242).

43. *BP* 3.13.39 makes that clear: He is the insight (*jnana*) born of renunciation (*vairagya*), devotion (*bhakti*) and self-conquest (*atmajaya*) and the teacher of [that] knowledge (*vidya-guru*).

44. [The manuscript ends abruptly here. As explained in the Editor's Note, Dennis Hudson never wrote the Conclusion to the book, as he intended.—ed.]

APPENDIX I

1. Apart from radical renunciants, the correspondence here between five types of householder devotees and the "five" (*pancha*) in *pancharatra* may be intentional, for Krishna's description of them in "The Summary of the *Brahman* Doctrine" links them to the *Pancharatra Agama* of Satvatas.

2. "The One-Yet-Many Consecration" (*ekaneka-diksha*) described in the *Satvata-samhita* is open to men and women of all four ritual classes, young and old. Though it is one diksha, with minor variations it produces many results, qualifies devotees to perform puja for themselves (*svartha-puja*), and will lead them to isolation from matter (*kaivalya*), or to worldly prosperity and pleasure (*bhoga*), or to both (*SS* 18–20, esp. 18.1–7; Smith 1975: 528–530).

3. K.K.A. Venkatachari noted that among Sri Vaishnavas today, *tantiram* in this verse is glossed to mean the Pancharatra Agama and *mantiram* to mean the Vaikhanasa Agama (personal communication).

4. See the gloss by P. B. Annankaracariyar (1928, 1929).

5. That is an astika version of the nastika doctrine of detachment expressed, for example, by Sthaviravada (Theravada) Buddhists: The true basis of detachment and eradication of the craving to be (*trishna*) is not the empty absence of atman (*anatma*), but the very fullness and omnipresence of atman. By seeing the atman in everything, one's individual desire (*kama*) is fulfilled, not blown out, and thus pacified and made inoperative in the spacetime realm of "things" (*namarupa*).

6. In the Adhivasa-diksha, for example, purification is effected by the acharya through mantras before he touches the sadhaka's head with the ghee left over from eight homa offerings. Anyone with sin or defilement must first be cleansed before the acharya can place the vyuhas in his body and before he can receive the consecrating unction (*abhisheka*).

7. This interpretation follows versions given by Tagare 1976–1979 2: 1982, notes, and Tapasyananda 1980–1982 2: 66, notes. The last item, sacramental rite (*samskara*), probably included the branding of the conch and wheel on the sadhaka's shoulders and his or her application of the insignia (*nama*) of Sri Vishnu (*Tirumal*) on the forehead and other parts of the body. Those rites are included in the "five sacraments" (*pancha-samskara*) administered at the consecration of Sri Vaishnavas today.

8. In *BP* 11.13.8–42 Krishna discussed the awareness of "I" at length, repeating the teaching he, in the form of a goose (*hamsa*), had once given Sanaka and the other Kumaras.

9. Tagare's explanation from various commentaries (1976–1979 5: 1978–1980) guides my reading of this text.

10. Slightly revised from A. K. Ramanujan's translation in Ramanujan 1981: 26.

11. Translation in Ramanujan 1981: 60.

12. Ramanujan 1981: 50; 169; 76.

APPENDIX 2

1. The usual twelve-syllable mantra is *Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya* (*Om*, veneration to the Bhagavan Vasudeva). Its purifying power for the sadhaka seeking worldly gains is illustrated by the story of Dhruva who attains the position of the pole star (*Dhruva*) directly above Mount Meru (*BP* 4.8–12, esp. 4.8.53–62).

2. *SS* 18.61–87, esp. 18.84–85; Smith 1975: 528. This Vishnu-house appears to be the visakhayupa in stone. For the concept see Sanjukta Gupta 1971, and Maxwell 1988: 15–16.

3. The branding rite, called tapa, is portrayed in the film by H. Daniel Smith and K.K.A. Venkatachari, "The Hindu Sacrament of Surrender (*prapatti*)." Smith 1969 placed it in its liturgical context.

4. *Buddhacharita* 7.3, and note 3 (Asvaghosha 1984: 92–93). E. H. Johnston discusses the date of Asvaghosha ("between 50 B.C. and 100 A.D., with a preference for the first half of the first century A.D.") in Asvaghosha 1984: Part Two, xvi–xvii). See also Schopen 1997: 155–156.

5. See chapter 6 note 2 above.

6. See *SS* 19–21 (Smith 1975: 529–531). A useful analysis of similar rites performed in the Esoteric Buddhist context is found in Tucci 1970: 85–107.

7. Compare *Manu* 2.31–33: The first part of a male Brahmin's name should denote something auspicious and the second part should imply happiness. The first part of a male Kshatriya's should be connected with power and the second part should imply protection. The first part of a male Vaishya's should be connected with wealth and the second part should express thriving. The first part of a male Shudra's should express something contemptible and the second should denote service. The names of women should be pleasing and auspicious.

8. Dwivedi 1982: *Granthabhagah* 2 (Smith 1975: 516; also Deussen 1980 2: 828–833).

9. Dwivedi 1982: *Granthabagah* 3; *SS* 3 (Smith 1975: 516–517).

10. Dwivedi 1982: *Granthabhagah* 4; *SS* 4 (Smith 1975: 517).

11. Deussen 1980 2: 835–836. Regarding this final goal Deussen says, "the description in the last chapter [of] how he is to be felt and found by becoming conscious (*anubhava*) of him as the self in us, and not through intellectual activity is among the most beautiful and most precious that the ancient Indian plunge into the secrets of the inner self has brought to light" (Deussen 1980 2: 836).

12. The word *kalmasha* refers to that which destroys or poisons intentional action (from *karma-so*, according to Monier-Williams 1964: 263a). *Kalmasha* also denotes the kalakuta poison kept by Shiva in his throat (*BP* 8.7.43). Kalmasha poisons the thread of passion (*rajoguna*), causing it to produce desire (*kama*) and anger (*krodha*). When Arjuna asks Krishna why a person does evil (*papa*), even against his or her intentions, Krishna says the cause is the desire and anger that arise from the thread of passion. He later describes the sant immersed in brahma-nirvana as estranged from desire and anger (*BG* 3.37–43; Minor 1982: 137). Here the thread of rajas poisoned by kalmasha is the atman isolated in kaivalya without God at the center of consciousness. Nevertheless, as Kaliya's wives will point out below, God is the ultimate cause of the thread of rajas and its kalmasha defilement.

13. Dwivedi 1982: *Granthabhagah*, chap. 5; *SS* 5–6; Smith 1975: 517–520.

APPENDIX 3

1. Marichi: *BP* 3.12. 21–24; Kashyapa: *BP* 4.1.13; Kashyapa's descendents: *BP* 6.6.1–2, 25–45; and 6.18.

2. For these rites, see Hudson 1999b: 67–72.

3. Cattle are prescribed victims in the rajasuya, e.g., Aditi receives a pregnant reddish-white cow and the Maruts receive a pregnant dappled cow (*SB* 5.5.2.8–9). The slaughter of a barren cow, or of one that contains an embryo, its dismemberment, and its offering are described in *SB* 4.5.2.

4. *BP* 4.23.4–18. Tagare (1976–1979 2: 563) and Tapasyananda (1980–1982 1: 407) interpret *vaikhanasa* to mean vanaprastha, "forest dwelling," which is the way Prithu lived. It is doubtful that it refers to those who follow the Vaikhanasa Agama.

5. The Tamil courtly poems *Chilappatikaram* and *Manimekalai* depict shramana patrons celebrating Indra's annual spring and new year festivals (Hudson 1995c).

6. The Narayaniya is *Mbh* 12.324–353 (Ganguli 10: 114–217). The story of Vasu Uparichara is *Mbh* 12.323–324 (Ganguli 10: 119–129).

7. The Vasus in the *Rig Veda* include the Adityas, Maruts, Ashvins, Indra, Ushas, Rudra, Vayu, Vishnu, Shiva, and Kubera (Monier-Williams 1964: 930).

8. *Mbh* 12.322.23–24. The story of the origin of these Satvata teachings with the Seven Seers inspired by Goddess Sarasvati and approved by Narayana, and then taught by Brihaspati to Vasu Uparichara, after whose rule they disappeared, is told in *Mbh* 12.322.26–52.

9. *Mbh* 12.324.30–37 (following Ganguli's interpretaion of *brahmaloka* in 10: 126 note 1).

10. Mohini, "the wondrous shape of a woman," appears in *Mbh* 1.15–17 in the story of Astika (van Buitenen 1: 74-75). Her story is told at great length in *BP* 7.5–12.

APPENDIX 4

1. *JS* 22.75–20 (Smith 1975: 125). See also *Padma-samhita* 4.13 (Smith 1975: 232), and *Vishnutilaka-samhita* 3 (Smith 1975: 388). On the vimana of this Vishnu-house, the first abhigamana period corresponds to the north-facing side, the second and third upadana and ijya periods correspond to the east-facing side, the fourth svadhyaya period corresponds to the south-facing side, and the fifth yoga period corresponds to the west-facing side.

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Glossary

T= Tamil; all other terms are Sanskrit

abhayamudra (*abhayamudrā*) "fear-not" mudra of protection; the open hand faces the viewer with thumb and fingers straight up
abhichara (*abhicāra*) employment of spells for malevolent purposes
abhigamana cleansing rites performed before sunrise
abhijinmuhurta (*abhijinmuhūrta*) auspicious midday hour
Abhimanyu Arjuna's son
abhisheka (*abhiṣeka*) unction or ceremonial ablution
abhun-nripa (*abhun-nṛpa*) unborn protector of men
abja born of water
abrahmanye (*abrāhmaṇye*) in violation of the duties of a Brahman
achara (*ācāra*) disciplined behavior
acharya (*ācārya*) scholar priest
achyuta (*acyuta*) unfallen
adesha (*ādeśa*) rules of substitution
adharashakti (*ādhāraśakti*) the supporter's potency
Adharma son born of Brahma's back
adhibhautika (*ādhibhautika*) caused by demons and animals
adhidaivika (*ādhidaivika*) caused by the deities
adhipati emperor
***Adhivasa-diksha* (*Adhivāsa-dīkṣā*)** a Bhagavata ritual
adhvaryu an officiating priest at a sacrifice
adhyatmika (*ādhyātmika*) caused by oneself
Adikacchapa (T. Ādikaccapa; Skt. Ādikaśyapa) Primordial Tortoise
***Adipurana* (*Ādipurāṇa*)** ninth-century Jain text by Jinasena
adisarga (*ādisarga*) primordial emission of the universe
Adishesha (*Ādiśeṣa*) "First to Escape" and "Primordial Remainder"; Samkarshana

Aditi “Non-restraint” or “Expanson”; mother of Vamana the Dwarf and the asuras
aditya (*āditya*) deva; offspring of Kashyapa and Aditi
Aditya Chola (Ātitya Cōḻaṉ) (T) defeated Aparajitavarma c. 894, ending Pallava Dynasty
Adivaraha (Ādivarāha) cave-temple in Mamallapuram
adya purusha (*ādya puruṣa*) Person of the Beginning
agama (*āgama*) tradition or school of ritual practice, rites that “have come down”
agamika (*āgāmika*) scholar of agama
Agastya a sage who drank the sea dry
Aggalanimmati (T) wife of Dantivarman
Aghora “without fierceness”; one of the “five faces” of Shiva
Agni Fire
agnichayana (*agnicayana*) arranging or preparing a sacrificial fireplace
Agnidhra (Agnīdhra) eldest son of Priyavrata, ruler of Jambu
agrahya (*agrāhya*) ungraspable
ahamkara, ahamkarana (*ahaṃkāra, ahaṃkaraṇa*) ego, conception of individuality; “This am I”
ahavaniya (*āhavanīya*) eastern fire in Vedic sacrifice
ahi snake
ahimsa (*ahiṃsā*) non-injury
***Ahirbudhnya-samhita* (*Ahirbudhnya-saṁhitā*)** a samhita of the Pancharatra Agama
ahoratra (*ahorātra*) a day and night
ahutimudra (*āhutimudrā*) gesture referring to Vedic sacrifice; the thumb touches the tips of the second and third fingers
Aimpanaiccheri (Aimpaṉaiccēri) (T) a section of Kanchipuram
Aippachi (Aippaci) (T) eleventh Tamil month (October-November)
Airavata (Airāvata) Indra’s elephant
aishvarya (*aiśvarya*) sovereignty
***Aitareya Brahmana* (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*)** a brahmana associated with the Rig Veda
Aiyanar (Aiyanār) god born to Shiva and to Vishnu in the form of Mohini
Ajanabha (Ajanābha) region later named Bharata
Ajigarta (Ajīgarta) “Nothing to Swallow”; king who sold his son to be a victim in Harishchandra’s rajasuya
Ajita “The Unconquered,” a portion of the “Unobstructed”
ajivika (*ājīvika*) a type of ascetic
Akalankadeva (Akalaṅkadeva) “Without Stains”; Digambara acharya (ca. 720–780)
akasha (*ākāśa*) space
akirti (*akīrti*) infamy
Akrura (Akrūra) Yadu leader, relative of Krishna
akshara (*akṣara*) brahma unmanifest *brahman*
Akshini (Akṣiṇī) wife of Daksha, mother of sixty daughters
akshita (*akṣita*) undecaying
Akupara (Akūpāra) “the Unbounded”; Tortoise
Alakananda (Alakanandā) the Ganga River as it flows from Mt. Meru
Alarka a lila avatara; king who rules 66,000 years
Alavay (Ālavāy) (T) “mouth of poison”; Maturai

aloka nondirectional space
Alvar (*Āḻvār*) (T) Vaishnava Tamil poet; Alvar, like Nayanar, means ruler or master, but Shri Vaishnava acharyas later interpret it to mean "one who drowns in God."
***Amarakosha* (*Amarakośa*)** "heavenly treasury"; Sanskrit thesaurus, ca. 380 CE
Amaravati (Amarāvati) River river in Tamil Nadu, also known as the Anporunai
Amardaka (Āmardaka) dualist lineage of the Shaiva Agama
Amarka one of Shukra's sons, a teacher of Prahlada
amarsha (*amarṣa*) indignation
ambara sky; garment
Ambarisha (Ambarīṣa) son of Mandhata
Amitabha (Amitābha) the "Protector"; a buddha
Amoghavarsha (Amoghavarṣa) I Rashtrakuta king (ca. 814–880)
amrita (*amṛta*) "non-death"; the elixir of immortality
Amsha (Aṁśa) "portion, share"; an aditya
amshabhagena (*aṃśabhāgena*) through a share of glorious wealth
amshakala (*aṃśakalā*) shares and parts
Amshuman (Aṁśumān) son of Asamanjasa
amurtika (*amūrtika*) one without material form
ananda (*ānanda*) joy
anandamaya (*ānandamaya*) made of joy
Ananta "Endless," the Snake Samkarshana
Anasuya (Anasūyā) "Benevolence," wife of Atri
Andaka clan allied with the Satvakas
andhatamisra (*andhatāmisra*) spiritual ignorance or blindness
Anga (Aṅga) king who established kingship in first Manu Term
Angada (Aṅgada) monkey son of Valin
angamantra (*aṅgamantra*) subsidiary mantras
angastra (*aṅgāstra*) subsidiary weapons
Angirasa (Aṅgirasa) a prajapati, born of Brahma's mouth; father of Krishna's teacher
Ani (Āṉi) third Tamil month (June-July)
animan (*aṇiman*) the power of becoming minute
Aniruddha "the Unobstructed," one of the vyuhas of God; son of Pradyumna
anjalimudra (*añjalimudrā*) the two hollowed hands placed together at chest level in salutation or entreaty
ankushamudra (*aṅkuśamudrā*) mudra of the pointed elephant prod; the forefinger and thumb curl to form the shape of a hook, the remaining fingers curl toward the palm
anmula (*anmūla*) uprooted
anna food
annarasa the taste or essence of food
Anporunai (Ānporuṇai) River river in Tamil Nadu, also known as the Amaravati
Antal (Āṇṭāḷ) (T) Alvar also known as Kotai
anrita (*anṛta*) not true, false
antariksha (*antarikṣa*) "the space between"; the atmosphere
antarvyuha (*antarvyūha*) interior formation

antyaja born into the lowest caste
anubhava (*anubhāva*) personal experience
anugraha grace
Anumati "Goodwill"; fourth daughter of Angiras and Shraddha
anupura subcapital
anushravikakarma (*anuśravikakarma*) gross body engaged in activies enjoined by the Vedas
anushtubh (*anuṣṭubh*) a metrical system of four times eight syllables
anusvara (*anusvāra*) vowel nasality (indicated by a superscript dot)
Apah (Āpah) Water
apana (*apāna*) breath expelled down and out through the anus
Apantaratamas (Apāntaratamas) sage who taught the three Vedas
Aparajitavarma (Aparājitavarma) Nandivarman's great-great grandson (ca. 875–889)
apipasa (*apipāsa*) without craving or thirst
apsaras a dancer in Indra's heavenly court
apyayayoga "unification of consciousness by dissolving"
Aranyaka (Āraṇyaka) "forest-related"; class of texts closely tied to Brahmana ritual texts
archa (*arcā*) icon
Archi (Arci) "Luster"; part of Lakshmi, created from Vena's arms
ardhamandapa (*ardhamaṇḍapa*) porch
arghya hospitality
Arhana (Arhaṇa) "Honor"; a personal attendant of Bhagavan
arhat "foe destroyer"; enlightened being, one who has escaped samsara; (cap.) a king of southern Karnataka
Arishta (Ariṣṭa) asura in the shape of a bull
Arishtishena (Ariṣṭiśena) a royal rishi
artha prosperity; meaning
***Arthashastra* (*Arthaśāstra*)** treatise by Kautilya on the art of ruling
Aryama (Aryamā) leader of the ancestors (*pitri*)
Aryavarta (Āryāvarta) "Nobles' Realm"; north and central India
Asamanjasa (Asamañjasa) son of Sagara and Keshini
asamchaya (*asaṃcaya*) not hoarding
asana (*āsana*) disciplined posture
asanga (*asaṅga*) without clinging
asatkrita (*asatkṛta*) performed untruly
asharira (*aśarīra*) without a body
Ashoka (Aśoka) Maurya (r. ca. 274–236 BCE), emperor who supported Buddhism after he had conquered his empire
Ashoka stupa (Aśoka stūpa) Buddhist relic shrine supposedly built by King Ashoka
ashokavadana (*aśokāvadāna*) "legend of Ashoka"
ashrama (*āśrama*) stage of life of a Brahman; abode of ascetics
ashraya (*āśraya*) place of refuge
Ashtabhujasvamin (Aṣṭabhujasvāmin) the Lord with Eight Arms
ashtanga (*aṣṭāṅga*) "eight-limbed"; eight miraculous powers
ashubha (*aśubha*) polluting, impure, inauspicious

ashunya (*aśūnya*) not empty
Ashva (Aśva) Krishna as Horse
ashvamedha (*aśvamedha*) horse sacrifice
Ashvatara (Aśvatara) naga ruling in Patala, father of Madalasa
ashvattha (*aśvattha*) sacred fig tree; pipal tree
Ashvatthaman (Aśvatthāman) Drona's son, who had the power of Shiva
Ashvin (Aśvin) a class of agricultural deities
Asikni (Asiknī) wife of Daksha, mother of sixty daughters
Asita sage who taught the *Pancharatra Upanishad* to the Ancestors
asteya absence of theft
astikya (*āstikya*) affirmation of Veda
astra arrow; weapon
asura anti-deva, demon
Atala (Atāla) world below Earth
***Atharva-angirasa* (*Atharva-aṅgirasa*)** tradition descending from Atharva and Aṅgirasa, founders of worship with fire and the soma sacrifice
Atharva Veda sometimes called the "fourth Veda"
Ati (Āṭi) (T) fourth Tamil month (July-August)
atikal (*aṭikaḷ*) (T) feet
atman (*ātman*) the Self, the true self
atma sharirin (*ātma śarīrin*) "the Self of the body"; corporeal body
atmavat (*ātmavat*) prudent or judicious
Atri "Devourer"; one of the Seven Seers, born from Brahma's eye
Attiyur (Attiyūr) hamlet southeast of Kanchipuram
Aurva "Underwater Fire that Will Destroy the World"; disciple of Shandilya
avadhuta (*avadhūta*) a radical renunciant freed of all desire
Avalokiteshvara (Avalokiteśvara) a bodhisattva
Avani (Āvaṇi) (T) fifth Tamil month (August–September)
Avantipura home of Sandipani, guru of Krishna and Balarama
***Avashyaka-niruti* (*Avaśyaka-niruti*) of Bhadrabahu (Bhadrabāhu) II** sixth-century Jain commentary
avatara (*avatāra*) descent, manifestation of God in the universe
avidya mistaken knowledge; misperception
avikalpa "not distinguished or particularized"; completely passive object of perception
Ay (Āy) Dynasty rulers of Kerala, ca. 300 BCE–600 CE
ayana path; resting place
Ayodhya (Ayodhyā) capital of the Kosala region
ayudhapurusha (*āyudhapuruṣa*) a weapon in the shape of a person
ayurveda (*āyurveda*) "knowledge of longevity," traditional Indian medical science
Badari ashram of Narada on the mountain Gandhamadana
Bahlika region ruled by Kardama
bala indefatigable or transforming power; strength
Balarama (Balarāma) Krishna's elder brother
bali offering; (cap.) asura king, ruler of Patala, tricked by Vamana into giving him heaven and earth

balimudra (*balimudrā*) mudra of power or of offering; the fingers bend to the palm and the thumb curls over the forefinger

balin powerful

Bana (Bāṇa) asura ally of King Kamsa, eldest son of Bali

bappa bhattaraka (*bappa bhaṭṭāraka*) "venerable father"; used of some Buddhist teachers and Shaiva monks

Barhishmati (Barhiṣmatī) wife of Priyavrata

***Baudhayana Shrautasutra* (*Baudhayāna Śrautasūtra*)** contains methods of constructing Vedic altars

Bhadra (Bhadrā) seventh wife of Krishna

Bhadrapada (Bhādrapada) sixth Sanskrit month, August-September

bhadra pitha (*bhadra pīṭha*) holy seat

Bhadrashravas (Bhadraśravas) "He of Gracious Fame"; ruler of Bhadrashvas

Bhadrashvas (Bhadrāśvas) "Auspicious Horse"; region of Jambu east of Ilavrita

bhaga wealth, honor, virtue

Bhagadatta ruler allied with Jarasandha though at heart loyal to Yudhisthira

***Bhagavad-gita* (*Bhagavad-gītā*)** "Song of God," dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in book 6 of the *Mahabharata*

Bhagavan (Bhagavān) "the possessor of bhaga"; used as an honorific, e.g., Bhagavan Shiva, but in Bhagavata Dharma, "the Bhagavan" denotes Narayana Vasudeva's four vyuha formations.

bhagavan svayam (*bhagavān svayam*) the Bhagavan himself

Bhagavata (Bhāgavata) "those who belong to the Bhagavan"

Bhagavatam condensed version of Krishna's teaching, *BP* 3.8.7

***Bhagavata Purana* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*)** the primary textual source of Vaishnavism

Bhagiratha (Bhagīratha) Amshuman's grandson

Bhairavi (Bhairavī) fierce form of the Goddess

bhajan devotional song

bhakta devotee, participant in bhakti

bhakti "devout sharing"; devotional worship

bhaktiyoga discipline of devotion

bhalla a kind of arrow

Bharadvaja (Bharadvāja) one of the Seven Seers

Bharata son of Rishabha; also a brother of Rama

Bhārata India; portion of Jambu continent, south of the Himalayas

bhava (*bhāva*) existence; feeling

Bhava "Coming into Being"; one of the Maruts

Bhavani (Bhavānī) consort of Bhava; also identified with Uma

bhaya anxiety, fear

bhikshu (*bhikṣu*) Buddhist monk

Bhima (Bhīma) younger brother of Simhavishnuvarman, who founded lineage from which Nandivarman Pallavamalla descended in the sixth generation; also one of the Rudras; also Bhimasena

Bhimasena (Bhīmasena) Arjuna's brother, son of Kunti, who kills Jarasandha

Bhishma (Bhīṣma) warrior who fought on side of Kauravas

bhoga success in the material world; enjoyment
Bhoja clan ruled by Kamsa
bhojana food
Bhrami wife of Dhruva
Bhrigu (Bhṛgu) a prajapati, born of Brahma's skin; a clan led by Shukra
bhu, bhumi (*bhū, bhūmi*) the material realm; the earth
bhujamgatrasa (*bhujaṅgatrāsa*) "snake-fright" posture
bhukti worldly prosperity
bhuloka (*bhūloka*) Earth
Bhumi, Bhumidevi (Bhūmi, Bhūmidevī) Goddess Earth
bhupati (*bhūpati*) "Master of Earth"
Bhurloka (Bhūrloka) Earth and the seven realms of Rasa beneath
bhuta (*bhūta*) ghost
bhutagrama (*bhūtagrāma*) the assembly of living beings
Bhutam (Bhūtam) poet from the Kanchipuram region
bhutani (*bhūtāni*) material beings
bhutapati (*bhūtapati*) "Master of Ghosts"
bhuti (*bhūti*) "material cause"; to bring into being
bhutishakti (*bhūtiśakti*) the power to bring an act into being
Bhuvana father of Vishvakarma
bhuvarloka (*bhuvarloka*) the atmosphere, the sphere of Surya
bija (*bīja*) seed
bimba icon, image
Bindumati (Bindumatī) wife of Mandhata
bodha consciousness, perception
bodhi wakefulness
Brahma (Brahmā) great god, from whom emerges spacetime
brahmacharin (*brahmacārin*) celibate student
brahmakhya dhama (*brahmakhyā dhāma*) the "home" called *brahman*
brahmahatya (*brahmahatyā*) the sin of slaying a brahmin
brahmamuhurta (*brahmamuhūrta*) Brahma's hour, the hour before sunrise
brahman primordial being, leading to the derivative meanings of "growth," "expansion," or "evolution"
brahmana (brāhmaṇa) one of the portions of the Veda
brahmanda (*brahmāṇḍa*) "Brahma sphere" or "egg of Brahma"; spacetime
***Brahmanda Purana* (*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*)** one of the major puranas
brahmanirvana (*brahmanirvāṇa*) "extinction in *brahman*"; dissolurion into *brahman*
brahmapura fort of *brahman*
brahmarandhra "suture of Brahma"; aperture (or chakra) at crown of the head
brahma sanatana (*brahma sanātana*) ancient or eternal prayer
***Brahmavada* (*Brahmavāda*)** "Doctrine of *Brahman*"
***Brahmavadasya-samgraha* (*Brahmavādasya–saṃgraha*)** "Summary of the Doctrine of *Brahman*"
Brahmavadin (Brahamavādin) Jaina sect
Brahmavalli (Brahmavallī) section of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*
Brahmavarta (Brahmāvarta) land of Svayambhuva Manu

Brihacchloka (Bṛhachchloka) "He of Great Renown" or "of the Great Stanza"; son of Vamana and Kirti
***Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*)** one of the oldest upanishads, contained within the *Shatapatha Brahmana*
Brihadratha (Bṛhadratha) ruler of Magadha, father of Jarasandha
Brihaspati (Bṛhaspati) Jupiter; "Master of Prayer"; teacher of the gods
Brihaspatisava (*bṛhaspatisava*) sacrifice to Brihaspati performed by Daksha
brihat (*bṛhat*) great
***Brihatkathasaritsagara* (*Bṛhatkathāsaritsāgara*)** "Ocean of the Rivers of the Great Romance" by Somadeva
Budha the planet Mercury; Moon's son
Chaitra, Chitra (Caitra, Citra) first Sanskrit month (March-April)
chakra (*cakra*) wheel
chakrabjamandala (*cakrābjamaṇḍala*) "Wheel and Lotus" mandala
Chakranadi (Cakranadī) river also called Gandaki, source of shalagramas
chakravartin (*cakravartin*) emperor
chalamotu (*calamoṭu*) (T) "with water"
Chalukya (Calukya) Dynasty rulers of southest and central India from their capital at Badami, 6th–8th century
chamara (*camara*) fly-whisk
chamiyati (*cāmiyāṭi*) (T) a medium through whom a being speaks to others
Chamunda (Cāmuṇḍā) terrifying emanation of Durga
Chanda (Caṇḍa) asura slain by Durga
Chandika Durga (Caṇḍikā Durgā) fear-inspiring aspect of Durga
***Chandogya Upanishad* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*)** one of the oldest upanishada, associated with the *Sama Veda*
Chandrapada (Candrapada) mountain that connects earth with Patala
Chandravaloka (Candrāvaloka) king, father of Taravaloka
Chanura (Cāṇūra) wrestler killed by Krishna in Mathura
charana (*cāraṇa*) celestial panegyrist
Chatakopan (Caṭakōpan) (T) Alvar better known as Nammalvar
Chattanar (Cāttaṉār) (T) Tamil poet, fl. 550 CE
***Chatuhshloki Bhagavatam* (*Catuhślokī Bhāgavatam*)** "*Bhagavatam* in Four Stanzas"
Chatur Yuga (Catur Yuga) the set of four ages (*yuga*), measured by chronological time in deva years
chatvala (*catvāla*) open pit outside a vedi, providing dirt for altars
Chedi (Cedi) region ruled by Shishupala, ally of Jarasandha
Chelvan Apimanatunkan (Celvaṉ Apimanatuṅkaṉ) (T) "the prosperous man who is dear"; equivalent to Shri Vallabha
Chera (Cēraṉ) Dynasty (T) early rulers in Kerala
cheri (*cēri*) (T) section
Chermadevi (Cēraṉmātāvī) (T) town in the Pandya realm
chetas (*cetas*) consciousness
chid, chit, chitta (*cid, cit, citta*) consciousness
chihnamakhilam (*cihnamakhilam*) (T) complete insignia
***Chilappatikaram* (*Cilappatikāram*) (T)** Tamil epic by Ilankovatikal

chintamani (*cintāmaṇi*) "gem of thought"; wish-fulfilling jewel
chitra (*citra*) picture
Chitraketu (Citrakētu) (T) ruler of the Surasenas
Chitramaya Pallavaraja (Citramāya Pallavarāja) Nandivarman's enemy defeated by Udayachandra
Chitraratha (Citrarāthra) gandharva king
Chitrasikhandin (Citrasikhandin) the Seven Seers who composed the *Satvata Shastra*
chittah (*cittah*) those who are "reflective"
Chittrai (Cittirai) (T) first Tamil month (April-May)
chivikai (*civikai*) (T) balcony; palanquin
Chola (Cōḻaṉ) Dynasty (T) early Tamil rulers displaced by Pallavas and Pandyas
Dadapuram town in the Chola realm
Dadhichi (Dadhīci) sage who gave his body to create Indra's vajra
daitya asura; descendent of Kashyapa and Diti
daiva fate; depending on fate
Daksha (Dakṣa) "Dextrous in Sacrifice"; a prajapati born of Brahma's thumb
dakshina (*dakṣiṇa*) right (side); south
dakshina (*dakṣiṇā*) gifts made to a priest for performance of a sacrifice, or to a guru at completion of studies
Dakshinagni (Dakṣiṇāgni) "Southern Fire"; a deity
Dakshinakalika (Dakṣiṇakālikā) Kalika of the South, or Kalika Facing South
Dakshinamurti (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) "The South-Facing Material Form"
dakshinayana (*dakṣiṇāyaṇa*) the darkening half of the year
dakshinya-drishti-padavi (*dākṣiṇya-dṛṣti-padavī*) the "Path of the Southern Doctrine"
dama discipline of the breath or body; self-restraint, subduing of passions
dama (*dāma*) flower garland, necklace of beads
Damodara (Dāmodara) vyuha of Vasudeva
dana (*dāna*) ritual gift
danava (*dānava*) asura sons of Danu
danda (*daṇḍa*) a staff; righteous punishment
Dantavaktra "Crooked Tusk"; arrogant king killed by Krishna with his mace
Dantidurga (T) also known as Sahastunga Dantidurga Khadgavaloka; mid-eighth-century ruler who aided Nandivarman Pallavamalla
Dantivarnam son of Nandivarman and Reva
Danu wife of Kashyapa, mother of Panis
darbha a sacred grass
darshana (*darśana*) vision of God or His representation
Daruka (Dāruka) Krishna's charioteer
Dasharatha (Daśaratha) father of Rama
Dasharha (Dāśārha) clan allied with Satvatas
dasyayoga (*dāsyayoga*) yoga of the servant
Dattatreya (Dattātreya) emanation of Vishnu through Atri and Anasuya Devadatta; Kalki's swift white horse
daya (*dayā*) compassion
deha physical body

dehin embodied being
deva god; the "bright" or "shining" inhabitants of heaven
devadasi (*devadāsī*) female temple dancer
Devadhani (Devadhānī) Indra's capital, in the east
Devahuti (Devahūti) invocation of the gods
Devaka Kamsa's brother, father of Devaki
Devaki (Devakī) Krishna's birth mother in Mathura
Devakiputra (Devakīputra) Krishna as the son of Devaki
Devanathan Bhattachari, S. present priest of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple
Devapi (Devāpi) survivor of the Lunar Dynasty in Kali Yuga
Devi (Devī; T: Dēvi) the Goddess
***Devi Mahatmyam* (*Devī Māhātmyam*; T: *Dēvi Mahātmyam*)** the "Glorification of the Goddess," a portion of the *Markandeya Purana*
dhama (*dhāma*) abode
dhama parama (*dhāma parama*) supreme home, Highest Home (of Krishna)
Dhanuryajna (Dhanuryajña) Bow Sacrifice
Dhanvantari "He Moves in a Curve"; a portion of Hari, teacher of ayurveda
dhara bearer, one who holds up
dhara (*dhārā*) stream
dharana (*dhāraṇā*) holding in memory; fixed concentration
Dharani (Dharaṇī) Earth
dharani (*dhāraṇī*) a spell
dharma righteousness; the true or right order of the moving universe, in which (according to the Veda) each being plays an arranged role, which changes according to place and time
Dharma "true teaching" or "right doctrine"; a system of thought and practice
Dharmaraja Ratha (Dharmarāja Ratha) temple at Mamallapuram
Dharmashastra (Dharmaśāstra) "system of right order"; law texts
Dhataki (Dhātaki) a ruler of Pushkara
dhriti (*dhṛti*) satisfaction
Dhruva the pole star; Brahma's great-grandson
dhyana (*dhyāna*) inner vision; meditation, visualization as a mode of discipline
dhyanamudra (*dhyānamudrā*) the hand bends down toward the viewer, the thumb extends sideways, and the fingers curl inward
Digambara Jaina sect, "clothed by the four directions of space"
digdevata (*digdevatā*) directional deva
digvijaya conquering the four directions
diksha (*dīkṣā*) consecration
dinmurti (*diṅmūrti*) material forms of the eight directions
dipamudra (*dīpamudrā*) mudra of light; the hand bends its fingers inward with the forefinger slightly elevated
Dirghatamas (Dīrghatamas) seer in the *Rig Veda*
Diti "Restraint," mother of the daityas
dosha (*doṣa*) harm, error
doshadaridra (*doṣadaridra*) "poor in faults"
Draupadi (Draupadī) wife of the Pandava brothers

drava (*drāva*) melting
Dravida (Draviḍa) region modern Tamil Nadu
dravya substance perceived by the sense organs
Drigishvara (Dṛgīśvara) Surya, the "Ruler of Sight"
drishti (*dṛṣṭi*) insight
Drona (Droṇa) acharya of the Pandavas
Drumakulya a northern region, in the *Ramayana*
durga fortress
Durga (Durgā) "Beyond Reach"; the warrior Goddess
durgapala (*durgapāla*) protector of the fort
Durvasas (Durvāsas) sage, part aspect of Shiva, who cursed Indra
dushana (*dūṣaṇa*) bad inclination, violation, corruption
Dushyanta (Duṣyanta) husband of Shakuntala
Dvapara Yuga (Dvāpara Yuga) the third age in the great cycle
Dvaraka (Dvarakā) "Doorway"; city founded by Krishna in the western sea
dvarapala (*dvārapāla*) guardian of the doorway
dvesha (*dveṣa*) antagonism, hatred
dvija-samskriti (*dvija-saṁskṛti*) "twice-born"
dvijiha-amgini (*dvijiha aṁginī*) (T) "a woman with a double tongue"
dvipa (*dvīpa*) one of seven concentric continents separated by oceans
Dvivida monkey chief, friend of Kamsa
dyaus heaven
Ekadasharudra (Ekadaśarudra) the eleven Rudras
Ekamreshvara (Ekamrēśvara) (T) Pashupati temple to Shiva in Kanchipuram
ekamurti (*ekamūrti*) single material form
ekaneka (*ekāneka*) single-yet-many
ekantikabhakta (*ekāntikabhakta*) strict monotheist
Emusha (Emūṣa) "the Terrible"; Boar who rescued Earth
Gada (Gadā) Krishna's mace
gahana depths
gana (*gaṇa*) assembly
ganadhipati (*gaṇādhipati*) overlord
Ganapati (Gaṇapati) "Master of Hosts," Ganesha
Gandhamadana mountain location of Badari ashram in Kimpurusha
gandharva celestial musician
Ganesha (Gaṇeśa) "Ruler of Hosts," elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati
Ganga (Gaṅgā) Ganges River; also its goddess
Ganga (Gaṅgā)Dynasty Western Gangas: rulers based in south Karnataka, 3rd–10th centuries
Gangadvara (Gaṅgādvāra) modern Haridvara
Gangaikondacholapuram (Gaṅgaikondacōḻapuram; T: Kaṅkai koṉṭacōḻapuram) Chola capital 11th—13th centuries
Gangavadi (Gaṅgavadi) capital of the Ganga Dynasty in Karnataka
garbha embryo; womb
garbhagriha (*garbhagṛha*) inner sanctum, lit. "womb-room"
Garga (Gārga) acharya of the Yadava clan

Garuda (Garuḍa) kite bird that serves Vasudeva as vehicle
Gautama one of the Seven Seers
gayatri-vrata (*gāyatrī-vrata*) Gayatri vow
ghatakayar (*ghāṭakayar*) (T) members of a ghatika
gatha (*gāthā*) long poem or chant
ghatika (*ghāṭika*) (T) a learned assembly of Brahmins connected to kingship
ghora angirasa (*ghora āṅgirasa*) "angry son of Angiras," epithet of Krishna's teacher
Girisha (Girīśa) Shiva as Ruler of Mountains
Girivraja "Fenced by Mountains," Jarasandha's capital
go cow, cattle
Goda (T) Kotai, the Tamil poet Antal
Gokula "cowherd settlement" in Vraja, home of Krishna's stepfather, Nanda
gomriga (*gomṛga*) "bovine deer," a victim at a horse sacrifice
gopi (*gopī*) cowherd woman; village girl, devotee of Krishna
goshthi (*goṣṭhi*) learned assembly
gotra lineage through the male line
Govardhana hill in Vraja, held up by Krishna
Govinda vyuha of Vasudeva, Krishna
graha the "grasper"; there are several common meanings, including planet and eclipse
grahamudra (*grahamudrā*) mudra of the eclipse; the left hand is near or supports the right elbow, and the right hand faces its palm forward with thumb open and fingers bent toward the palm
Guha Skanda, son of Shiva
guha-akasha (*guha-ākāśa*) space within the cave of the heart
guhavasa (*guhāvāsa*) hidden place
guhyaka warrior yaksha, attendant of Kubera
guna (*guṇa*) qualities; thread
Gunabhadra (Guṇabhadra) disciple of Jinasena
guru teacher
hala plow
halahala (*hālāhala*) plant that produces kalakuta poison
hamsa (*haṃsa*) goose, signifying acute mental discrimination; (cap.) Krishna as Goose
***Hamsa Upanishad* (*Haṃsa Upaniṣad*)** a upanishad devoted to practice of meditation
Hanuman (Hanumān) monkey devotee of Rama, a "Supreme Bhagavata"
Hara "Destroyer"; name given to Shiva
hari golden, greenish, or tawny in color; (cap.) name for Bhagavan that refers to the tawny color of the lion
haridasa (*haridāsa*) "Hari's slave"; devotee
Harishchandra (Hariścandra) king famous for faithfulness to truth and for giving
Harivarsha (Harivarṣa) region of Jambu just south of Ilavrita
Hastinapura (Hastināpura) the Kuru capital
havirdhan (*havirdhān*) oblation for daily sacrifice
havya anything offered as an oblation to the gods

Hayagriva (Hayagrīva) horse-headed avatara of Vishnu; also an asura
hayamedha ashvamedha, horse sacrifice
Hehaya a people whose ruler was intoxicated with wealth and power
Himavan "He Who Possesses Snow"; Parvati's father
himsa (*himṃsā*) violence
Hiranmayavarsha (Hiraṇmayavarṣa) "Made of Gold," region where Bhagavan is the Tortoise
Hiranyagarbha (Hiraṇyagarbha) "Golden Embryo"; Brahma
Hiranyakashipu (Hiraṇyakaśipu) "Golden Clothes," asura son of Diti
Hiranyaksha (Hiraṇyākṣa) "Golden Eyes," asura son of Diti
Hiranyavarman (Hiraṇyavarman) father of Nandivarman Pallavamalla
homa poured oblations
hora (*horā*) hour, the twenty-fourth part of an ahoratra
hotri (*hotṛ*) the priest offering oblations at a sacrifice
hri (*hrī*) modesty
hridaya (*hṛdaya*) heart, seat of consciousness
Hrishikesha (Hṛṣīkeśa) "Ruler of the Senses"; vyuha of Vasudeva
hritstha (*hṛtstha*) abiding in the center of consciousness
Huhu (Hūhū) foremost gandharva, once the "grasper"
iccha (*icchā*) wish, intention
Idhmajihva "Fuel's Tongue"; second son of Priyavrata
ijya the midday liturjical service
Ikshvaku (Ikṣvāku) grandson of Surya, founder of Solar Dynasty
Ila (Ilā) Earth; also son of Kardama
Ilankovatikal (Iḻankōvaṭikaḷ) (T) Tamil writer, 5th–6th centuries CE
Ilavarta-varsha (Ilāvarta-varṣa) "Region that Changes Ila"
Ilavrita (Ilāvṛta) the central region of Jambu
Indivaraprabha (Indīvaraprabhā) daughter of Kanva and Menaka
Indra Vedic god of the atmosphere and rain; a position of benevolent ruler occupied by different beings who are born to it
Indradyumna "Indra's Strength"; Pandya king cursed by Agastya to be an elephant, who is reborn as Gajendra
Indrani (Indrāṇī) Indra's wife
Indraprastha Yudhishthira's capital
indriya the sense organs
intai (*iṇṭai*) (T) lotus
intaikkulam (*iṇṭaikkuḻām*) (T) lotus formation
***Irantan-tiruvantati* (*Iranṭām-tiruvantāti*) (T)** collection of poems by Bhutam
Iravat "Possessing Food," elephant ancestor of Airavata
Iravati (Irāvatī) wife of Parikshit
isha, ishvara (*īśa, īśvara*) ruler, lord
Ishana (Īśāna) one of the "five faces" of Shiva
ishita (*īśitā*) supreme dominion
itam (*iṭam*) (T) this place
itihasa (*itihāsa*) history
itihasa puratana (*itihāsa purātaṇa*) "old legend"

Jada Sumati (Jaḍa Sumati) "Stupid Sumati"; narrator of stories in *Markandeya Purana*
Jagadishvara (*Jagadīśvara*) Ruler of the Moving Universe
Jagannatha (Jagannātha) Lord of the Moving Universe
jagat, jagad the moving universe
jagatadiratma (*jagatādirātma*) the primal atman of the moving universe
jagrat (*jāgrat*) waking consciousness
Jaimini sage, disciple of Vyasa
jalakalmasha (*jalakalmaṣa*) liquid of defilement, kalakuta
Jamadagni one of the Seven Seers, father of Parashurama
Jambavat (Jāmbavat) Brahma's son, advisor to Rama
Jambavati (Jāmbavatī) daughter of Jambavat; mother of Krishna's son Samba
Jambha asura who defeated Indra
Jambu (Jambū) continent at the center of the earth
Janaloka one of the worlds beyond Dhruva
Janamejaya eldest son of Parikshit
Janardana (Janārdana) "He Who Agitates People" or "Impeller of Men"; aspect of Vishnu
japa repetitive recitation of mantras for devotional purposes
japamala (*japamālā*) circular garland of beads used for mantra recitation
Jara (Jarā) "Decay," "Old Age"
Jarasandha (Jarāsandha) "Joined by Decay"; Kamsa's father-in-law
Jatavedas (Jātavedas) "all-possesing"; the threefold fire, descended from Moon
Jaya "Victory"; guardian in Vaikuntha
***Jayakhya-samhita* (*Jayakhyā-saṁhitā*)** one of the samhitas of the Pancharatra Agama
Jayanta "Victorious"; also called Prishnigarbha
Jayanti (Jayantī) wife of Rishabha
Jina one of the 24 enlightened beings who taught the Jain tradition
Jinasena Digambara Jain acharya (9th century)
jiva (*jīva*) the hidden life of the body
jnana (*jñāna*) knowledge; omniscience
***Jnanamritasara-samhita* (*Jñānāmṛtasara-saṁhitā*)** a Pancharatra text
jnanamudra (*jñānamudrā*) sign in which the little finger stands up straight, the other fingers curl into the palm, and the thumb bends over the index finger
jnana guhyatama (*jñāna guhyatama*) most secret knowledge
jneya (*jñeya*) "what should be known"
Kacchapa (Kaccapa) (T; Skt. Kaśyapa) Krishna as Tortoise
kacchiyon (*kacciyōn*) (T) "Kanchi's owner"
Kadamba Dynasty rulers in Karnataka, late 4th to early 6th centuries
Kadru (Kadrū) Kaliya's father
Kaikasi (Kaikasī) daughter of Sumali, mother of Ravana
Kaikeyi (Kaikeyī; T: Kaikēyi) co-wife of Dasharatha, mother of Bharata
Kailasa (Kailāsa) mountain where Shiva dwells
Kailasanatha (Kailāsanātha) Temple in Kanchipuram, ca. 720 CE; in Ellora, mid-8th century
Kaitabha (Kaiṭabha) "Of Desire's Likeness"; asura who stole Veda

kaivalya aloneness; consciousness of the atman as distinct from the material world
kala (*kalā*) a fraction; a digit of the moon
kala (*kāla*) time; eternal Time; also black
kalakuta (*kālakūṭa*) "time's trap" or "black deception"; poison churned up from the Milk Ocean
Kalanemi (Kālanemi) "portion of time"; asura slain by Vishnu
Kalanjara (Kālañjara) mountain where Bharata is reborn as a deer
Kalapa (Kalāpa) village where Devapi and Maru live
Kali (Kālī; T: Kāḷi) the Goddess as anger
Kalika (Kālikā) Goddess, emanation of Parvati
Kalikanri (Kalikaṉṟi) (T) "One who put down with a strong hand the might of Kali," Alvar also known as Tirumangai
Kalindi (Kālindī) the river Yamuna as a goddess; Krishna's fourth wife
kalirinralay (*kaḷiṟiṉralai*) (T) elephant's head
Kaliya (Kāliya) serpent defeated by Krishna in the Yamuna River
Kali Yuga the fourth age in the great cycle, in which we live
Kalki (Kalkī) final avatara of Vishnu
kalmasha (*kalmaṣa*) stain; kalakuta
kalpa a day of Brahma, a great cycle of time containing 1,000 yugas or 432 million mortal years; (cap.) son of Dhruva
kalpataru wish-fulfilling tree
kalyana (*kalyāṇa*) excellent, beautiful
kama (*kāma*) pleasure
Kamadeva (Kāmadeva) god of desire, born of Brahma's heart; the Lord of Senses
Kamadhenu (Kāmadhenu) wish-fulfilling cow
Kamakottam (Kamakkōttam) (T) temple for the Goddess in ancient Kanchipuram
Kamakshi (Kāmākṣī) Goddess
kamanurupam (*kāmānurūpam*) in whatever form desired
Kamatha (Kāmaṭha) the Tortoise
kamavasayita (*kāmāvasāyitā*) supressing all desires
kamavriksha (*kāmavṛkṣa*) wish-granting "tree of desire"
Kampavarman (r. ca. 847–880) son of Nandivarman III
Kamsa (Kaṁsa) demon ruler of Mathura, defeated by Krishna
Kanchipuram (Kāñcīpuram) capital city of the Pallava Dynasty
Kandan Marampavaiyar second wife of Nandivarman III
Kandarpa another name for Kamadeva
Kannan (Kaṇṇaṉ) (T) Krishna
kanni (*kaṉṉi*) (T) virgin
kannin chiruttampu (*kaṇṇiṉ ciṟutāmpu*) (T) "poem of eleven stanzas"
kantakadruma (*kaṇṭakadruma*) thorn bush wood
Kanva (Kaṇva) seer of the Lunar Dynasty
Kapalika (Kāpālika) a type of Shaiva ascetic who carries a skull
kapi ape
Kapila seer who originated samkhya
Karabhajana (Karabhājana) shramana son of Rishabha
karana (*kāraṇa*) causal necessity

karana-sukshma-sharira (*kāraṇa-sūkṣma-śarīra*) body of causation or causal subtle body
Karansukara (Karaṇsūkara) "Causal Boar"
Kardama "Mud," husband of Devahuti; born of Brahma's shadow
karma action performed with intended consequences in mind, e.g., sacrifice, ceremony, vrata
Karna (Karṇa) eldest brother among the Pandavas
Karnataka (Karṇāṭaka) area of central-western India
Kartika, Karttika (Kārtika) the eighth Sanskrit month (October-November)
Karttikai (Kārttikai) (T) eighth Tamil month (November-December)
karuna (*karuṇa*) compassion
Karur (Karūr) Chera capital, also known as Vanji
Karusha (Karūṣa) region ruled by Paundraka
kashaya (*kāṣāya*) ochre
Kashi (Kāśī) Banaras, Varanasi
Kashyapa (Kaśyapa) the prajapati "Black-teeth" or Tortoise; "Vision," one of the Seven Rishis, mind-born son of Marichi
Kataka same as Khatakka; name of Nandivarman's clan
katavesha (T) Katava ruler
***Kathasaritsagara* (*Kathāsaritsāgara*)** "Ocean of the Stream of Stories"
Kaumodaki (Kaumodakī) Hari's mace
kaupina (*kaupīna*) loincloth
Kaurava clan opposing the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata* war
Kausalya (Kausalyā) mother of Rama
Kaushambi (Kauśāmbi) capital of the Magadha region
Kaushika (Kauśika) one of Jarasandha's generals
Kaushiki (Kauśikī) the golden Goddess known as Chandika and Durga
***Kaushitaki Upanishad* (*Kauśītaki Upaniṣad*)** one of the older upanishads, associated with the *Rig Veda*
Kaushtubha (Kauṣṭubha) gem that emerged from churning the Milk Ocean
Kaveri (Kāverī; T: Kāvēri) River river in Chola and Muttaraiyar realms
Kavi son of Priyavrata
kavya oblation of food to the ancestors
kavya (*kāvya*) literary composition, poem
Kaya (Kāya) Body, a form of Brahma
***Kena Upanishad* (*Kena Upaniṣad*)** one of the oldest upanishads, associated with the *Sama Veda*
Keshava (Keśava) vyuha of Vasudeva; Krishna as slayer of Keshin
Keshin (Keśin) asura in the shape of a horse
Keshini (Keśiṇī) secondary wife of Sagara
Ketumala (Ketumāla) region of Jambu west of Mt. Meru
khanda (*khaṇḍa*) fragment
khandava (*khāṇḍava*) sugarplums
Khatakka Nandivarman's clan
khatvanga (*khaṭvaṅga*) one or more skulls on top of a staff; (cap.) king who was progenitor of the Raghu Dynasty

khatvanga-dhvaja (*khaṭvaṅga-dhvaja*) the khatvanga banner
kimpurusha (*kimpuruṣa*) class of celestial being with human bodies and horse heads; (cap.) region of Jambu directly north of Bharata
kinnara same as kimpurusha
kinnari (*kinnarī*) kinnara woman
kirtana (*kīrtana*) communal singing of Bhagavan's glories
Kirti (Kīrti) "Glory, Fame," wife of Vamana
Kirtivarman (Kīrtivarman) II Chalukya ruler defeated by Dantidurga, mid-8th century
kolam (*kōlam*) (T) ornamental mandala drawn each morning on the doorstep
Konka (Koṅka) territory visited by Rishabha
Kosala region ruled by the Solar Dynasty
kosha (*kośa*) level or layer of Bhagavan's body; "sheath"
Kotai (Kōtai) poet better known as Antal
kottiyar (*kōṭṭiyar*) (T) "those in the assembly"
koyil (*kōyil*) (T) palace
Kratu "Will," a prajapati, born of Brahma's hand
Krauncha (Krauñca) the fifth dvipa from the center
Kraushtuki (Krauṣṭuki) Brahmin to whom Markandeya tells the *Devi Mahatmyam*
krida, kridartha (*krīḍa, krīḍārtha*) play, sport
Kripa (Kṛpa) "Compassion," chief priest at Parikshit's horse sadrifices
Krishna (Kṛṣṇa) Vasudeva
Krishna I son of Amoghavarsha
Krishnakatha (*Kṛṣṇakathā*) the Krishna Story
krita-avatara (*kṛta-avatāra*) one who has descended
Kritamala (Kṛtamālā; T: Kirutumāl) River also called Vaigai River, in Pandya realm
Kritavirya (Kṛtavīrya) father of Kartaviryarjuna, defeated by Parashurama
Krita Yuga (Kṛta Yuga) the first age, Satya Yuga
Krittika (Kṛttikā) the third of 27 lunar mansions
kriya ritual performance
kriyashakti (*kriyaśakti*) the power to intend an act
kriyayoga "unified consciousness during ritual performance"
Krodha Anger, born of Brahma's brow
kshama (*kṣamā*) forbearance
kshatra (*kṣatra*) dominion, might
Kshatriya (Kṣatriya) member of the second varna, the ruling or military caste
kshetra (*kṣetra*) field
kshetrajna (*kṣetrajña*) knower of the field
kshiti mandala (*kṣiti maṇḍala*) the globe, the earth
kshraum (*kṣraum*) part of a "seed mantra"
Kubera "Giver of Wealth"; a rakshasa, but leader of the yakshas
Kukura clan allied with Satvakas
kula clan
Kulachala (Kulācala) a mountain ashram
kuladeva clan deity
kulam (*kuḻām*) (T) an assembled group

kulamallar (T) clan's wrestlers
kulinga (*kuliṅga*) shrike
Kumara (Kumāra) "son, prince"; Brahma's four sons, protectors of the four directions
kumbhabhisheka (*kumbhābiṣeka*) consecration of a temple
Kumarakottam (Kumarakōttam) (T) temple for Skanda in ancient Kanchipuram
Kumbakarnam (Kumbhakarṇa; T: Kumpakarṇan) Ravana's half-brother
kunjarapati (*kuñjarapati*) "the father of master elephants"
Kunti (Kuntī; T: Kunti) mother of Arjuna
Kuram (Kūram) town north of Kanchipuram
Kurma (Kūrma) Tortoise
***Kurma Purana* (*Kūrma Purāṇa*)** one of the major upanishads
Kurukurnakar (Kurukūrnakar) home of Maran Chatakopan
kusha (*kuśa*) a sacred grass; (cap.) the continent immediately surrounding Shalmala; also son of Rama and Sita
Kushadhvaja (Kuśadhvaja) king who worshiped Sudarshana
Kushavati (Kuśavatī) residence of Kusha, son of Rama
Kutaka (Kuṭaka) territory visited by Rishabha
Kutakachala (Kūṭakācala) mountain where Rishibha's body was burned up
Kuvalayapida (Kuvalayāpīḍa) "Chaplet of Blue Waterlilies," Kamsa's raging elephant
Kuvalayashva (Kuvalayāśva) father of Alarka
laghiman the power of attaining extreme lightness
lakshana (*lakṣaṇa*) topic, characteristic, mark
Lakshmana (Lakṣmaṇa) Rama's faithful brother and devotee
Lakshmana (Lakṣmaṇā) Krishna's eighth wife
Lakshmi (Lakṣmī) the Goddess as goddess of wealth
***Lalita-mahatmya* (*Lalitā-māhātmya*)** portion of the *Brahmanda Purana*
lalitasana (*lalitāsana*) relaxed posture
Lanka (Laṅkā) island realm, south of Bharata, ruled by Ravana
Lava son of Rama and Sita
lila (*līlā*) play
linga (*liṅga*) mark, emblem; Shiva's iconic form; penis; "subtle body"
***Linga Purana* (*Liṅga Purāṇa*)** one of the major upanishads
Lobha Greed, born of Brahma's lower lip
loka world, directional space
Lokaloka (Lokāloka) mountainous boundary between directional and nondirectional space
lokanatha (*lokanātha*) lord of the world
lolupa eager desire
Machi (Māci) (T) eleventh Tamil month (February-March)
Madalasa (Madālasā) wife of Kuvalayashva
madanubhava (*madanubhāva*) my (i.e., Hari's) authority
madanugraha my (i.e., Hari's) grace
Madhava (Mādhava) vyuha of Vasudeva
Madhavi (Mādhavī) goddess to whom Sita appealed

Madhu "Deluded Passion"; "Sweet Intoxicating Drink"; asura who stole Veda; also a clan allied with Satvakas
Madhurakavi *see* Maran Kari
Madhusudana (Madhusūdana) "Destroyer of Deluded Passion"
Madhuvana area on the Yamuna River where Dhruva practiced tapas
Madhyandina (Madhyaṅdina) a gotra consecrated to the Mantrasiddhanta Path
Madra (Madrā) Lakshmana, Krishna's eighth wife
Madurai (T: Maturai) capital of the Pandya realm
madya wine
Magadha territory west of Mathura, ruled by Jarasandha
Magha (Māgha) eleventh Sanskrit month (January-February)
mahabala (*mahābala*) great force
***Mahabharata* (*Mahābhārata*)** epic tale of the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas
mahabhisheka (*mahābhiṣeka*) "Great Unction," great consecration
mahad same as mahat
mahakala (*mahākāla*) "great Time"
Mahamaya (Mahāmāyā) Goddess as transcendent and magical creativity
mahamoha (*mahāmoha*) great confusion as a mode of consciousness
mahapatakin (*mahāpatakin*) great sinners
mahaprasthana (*mahāprasthāna*) great departure
mahapunya (*mahāpuṇya*) "of great purity," greatly auspicious
Maharloka one of the worlds beyond Dhruva
mahas performance, festival
mahasamantar (*mahāsamantar*) (T) superior dependent rulers
mahashantividhana (*mahāśantividhāna*) "Great Pacification"; rites to pacify the world
mahasiddhi (*mahāsiddhi*) the eight occult powers
mahat great; "intellect or the intellectual principle (according to the samkhya philosophy the second of the 23 principles produced from Prakriti, and so called as the *great* source of Ahamkara and Manas)"—MW 1964: 794b
mahatman (*mahātman*) insightful sage
Mahavairochana (Mahāvairocana) the "effulgent One"
mahavedi (*mahāvedi*) sacrificial arena
Mahavira (Mahāvīra) son of Priyavrata; also a Jaina tirthankara
Mahavishnu (Mahāviṣṇu) Transcendent Vishnu
Mahendravarma I (ca. 580–630) third ruler in Pallava line after Nandivarman
Mahendravarma II (ca. 668–669) fifth ruler in Pallava line after Nandivarman
Mahendravarma III yuvaraja, son of Narasimhavarma Rajasimha II
Maheshvara (Māheśvara) "those who belong to Shiva, the Great Ruler"
Mahi Earth
mahiman illimitable bulk
Mahisha (Mahiṣa) the Buffalo Demon
Mahishasuramardini (Mahiṣāsuramardinī) Durga as Slayer of the Buffalo Demon
maithuna sexual union
Maitreya sage who learned the *Bhagavatam* from Parashara

makara crocodile-like beast; the "grasper"
makara samkranti (*makara saṃkrānti*) winter solstice as celebrated about 23 days after the actual solstice, because of the precession of the equinoxes
Mal (Māl) (T), "The Dark One" or "The Great One"; Krishna or Vishnu; or Lust, slain by Krishna to gain Pinnai as a bride
mala defilement, impurity
Mali (Mālī) asura slain by Vishnu after churning of the Milk Ocean
Malkhed capital of Amoghavarsha I
Malyavan (Mālyavān; T: Malyavān) asura slain by Vishnu after churning of the Milk Ocean
mamaka (*mamaka*) "This is mine"
Mamallapuram (Māmallapuram) port city, also called Mahabalipuram
mamsa (*māṃsa*) meat
manas mind or mental activity
Manasottara (Mānasottara) "Beyond the Mind" or "Boundary of the Mind," mountain range of Mt. Meru
mandala (*maṇḍala*) "circle"; schematic map of the sacred universe
mandapa (*maṇḍapa*) hall
Mandara "Sluggish"; mountain used to churn the Ocean of Milk
Mandara (Mandāra) one of the pancha-vrikshas
Mandhata, Mandhatri (Māndhātā, Māndhātri) "Pious Man"; father-in-law of Saubhari
***Mandukya Upanishad* (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*)** 12 sentences long, it explains the syllable *Om*
Mangalanatalvan (T) ruler of the Mangala Country
Mangalarashtra-bhartri (Maṅgalaraṣṭra-bhartṛ) ruler of the Mangala Country
Manimekelai (Maṇimēkelai) (T) goddess of the trade routes to Southeast Asia
***Manimekalai* (*Maṇimēkelai*) (T)** Tamil epic by Chattanar
Manipravala (*maṇipravāḷa*) "jewels and coral," mixed Sanskrit and Tamil, language of the later Sri Vaishnavas
Mannaikudi (Maṉṉaikudi) (T) site of a battle won by Udayachandra
Mannarkoyil (Maṉṉārkōyil) (T) town in the Pandya realm
mantira (T) mantra
mantra sacred Vedic formula
mantramurti (*mantramūrti*) the material form of the mantra
Mantrasiddhanta Path (Mantrasiddhānta Mārga) one of four paths taught by Brahma
mantrimandala (*mantrimaṇḍala*) assembly of ministers
manvantara Manu Term; one-fourteenth of a Brahma year of 4,324,000 mortal years
Maran Chatakopan (Māraṉ Caṭakōpaṉ) (T) Nammalvar, "The Venerable One of Southern Kurukur"
Maran Kari (Māṟaṉ Kāri) (T), minister of Varagunavarman I; also known as Madhura Kavi
Maravarman Rajasimha (Māravarman Rājasimha) (730–765) Shaiva Pandya who supported the opponents of Nandivarman's rule

marga (*mārga*) path
Margashirsha (Mārgaśīrṣa) ninth Sanskrit month (November-December)
Marichi (Marīci) "Light Ray"; mind-born son of Brahma, father of Kashyapa
Marisha (Māriṣā) daughter of an apsaras, adopted by the trees, wife of Daksha
Markali (Mārkaḻi) (T) ninth Tamil month (December-January)
Markandeya (Mārkaṇḍeya) rishi who practices severe tapas
***Markandeya Upanishad* (*Mārkaṇḍeya Upaniṣad*)** one of the major upanishads
Maru survivor of the Solar Dynasty in the Kali Yuga
marukantara desert region, ancient name of Marvara
Maruts storm gods who protect worshipers, give rain and fertility
masa (*māsa*) month
Matarishvan (Mātariśvan) Fire
Mathura (Mathurā) city on the Yamuna, capital of the Yadus' land
matsamyata (*matsāmyata*) equality with one (i.e., with Krishna)
matsya fish; (cap.) Krishna as Fish
***Matsya Purana* (*Matsya Purāṇa*)** the first and oldest of the puranas
***Mattavilasa Prahasana* (*Mattavilāsa Prahasana*)** Sanskrit farce by King Mahendravarman
mattrakal (T) dignitary mentioned in first inscription on prakara wall
mauna moderation in speech; taciturnity
Maya "Architect"; asura yogin
Maya (Māyā) God's delusive creative power; Yogamaya
mayamudra (*māyāmudrā*) gesture in which the thumb and the ring finger touch
medas fat
Medini (Medinī) Earth "having the fat of fertility"
Menaka (Menakā) apsaras, mother of Parvati; mother of Indivaraprabha
Meru mountain at the center of Jambu, north of Bharata
Merudevi (Merudevī) wife of Nabhi
meshaya (*meṣāya*) act like a ram
Mimamsaka (Mīmāṁsāka) follower of Mimamsa school of Brahmin ritualists
mina (*mīna*) fish
mithuna a male and female couple
Mitra bright daytime, worshiped with Varuna
Mitravinda (Mitravindā) Krishna's fifth wife
mleccha barbarian
moda delight
moha delusion; infatuation as a mode of consciousness
Mohini (Mohiṇī) "She Who Deludes"
mriga (*mṛga*) mountain lion; wild beast
Mrikanda (Mṛkaṇḍa) father of Markandeya
mrita (*mṛta*) dead, death
Mrityu (Mṛtyu) Death
Muchukunda (Mucukunda) yogin, son of Mandhatri
Mudgala an exemplar of generosity
mudra (*mudrā*) a position of the hands; in Tantric rites, a grain preparation
muhurta (*muhūrta*) "hour," actually 48 minutes; time of day

mukti emancipation from samsara
Mukunda "He Who Gives Emancipation"; name of Krishna
mukutankal (T) parts of a crown
mula (*mūla*) root
muladesha (*mūladeśa*) "realm of the root"
muladhara, muladharachakra (*mūlādhāra, mūlādhāracakra*) "root support"; chakra at the base of the spine; in Tantra, the "wheel containing the root that supports [the body]"
Mulaka (Mūlaka) kshatriya who escaped Parashurama and regnerated the Solar Dynasty
mulaprakriti (*mūlaprakṛti*) sovereign who is the basis of the mandala realm
Munda (Muṇḍa) asura slain by Durga
muni (*muṇi*) sage
Mura Yavana punished by Bhagadatta; five-headed asura killed by Krishna
murti (*mūrti*) material form of God; icon; (cap.) wife of Dharma, mother of Nara and Narayana
musala club or pestle
Mushtika (Muṣṭika) wrestler slain by Balarama in Mathura
mushtimudra (*muṣṭimudrā*) "mudra of the fist": the four fingers fold tightly into the palm and the thumb wraps over the forefinger
mutarayar (T: *muttaraiyar*) chieftains of agricultural lands
Muyalakan (T) demon on whose head Shiva dances the tandava
Nabhi (Nābhi) eldest son of Agnidhra, ruler of Bharata region of Jambu
***Nacchiyar Tirumoli* (*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*) (T)** poems by Kotai
naga (*nāga*) snake, esp. a multiheaded snake; person of low socioritual status
Nagapattinam (T) "Naga's port city"
nagarattar (*nakarattār*) (T) "leading citizens"; a group of the Chettiyar caste
Nagnajiti (Nāgnajitī) Satya, Krishna's sixth wife
Nahusha (Nahuṣa) king intoxicated by wealth and power
Naimisha (Naimiṣa) forest setting of narration of *Bhagavata Purana*
Naishada (Naiṣāda) tribals; people ceated from Vena's thigh
Nakaran (Nakarāṉ) of bounteous Kurukur (Kurukūr) epithet of Maran Chatakopan
nakshatra (*nakṣatra*) star or constellation
Nala monkey son of Vishvakarman; builder of bridge to Lanka
nalayira-divya-prabandha (*nālāyira-divya-prabandha*) (T) "Four Thousand Divine Stanzas"
nalika (*nālika*) a period of 24 minutes
nama (*nāma*) name
namah (*namaḥ*) veneration
namarupa (*nāmarūpa*) name-and-form
Nammalvar (Nammāḻvār) Alvar also known as Chatakopan
Namuchi (Namuci) "He Does Not Release Rain"; asura killed by Indra with foam from the Milk Ocean
nanatantravidhanena (*nānātantravidhānena*) by means of various Tantra rites
Nanda "Pleasing"; personal attendant of Bhagavan; Krishna's foster-father
Nanda (Nandā, Alakanandā) an aspect of Hari

Nandaka "He Makes Happy"; Krishna's knife or sword that cuts self-doubt
Nandipuram site of a west-facing temple predating the Vaikuntha Perumal
Nandishvara (Nandīśvara) "Ruler of the Happy"; Rudra's servant
Nandivarman called the Parama Bhagavata; founder of the ruling lineage of Kanchipuram
Nappinai *see* Pinnai
nara man; (cap.) the rishi who forgets
Narada (Nārada) a prajapati, born of Brahma's lap
Naraka Purgatory; also, an asura ally of Kamsa
Narakantaka (Narakāntaka) Krishna as Naraka's slayer
Narakari (Narakāri) Krishna as Naraka's foe
Naranan (Nāraṇaṉ) (T) Narayana
Naranarayana (Naranārāyaṇa) "Narayana as Man" or "Nara and Narayana"
Narasimha *see* Nrisimha
narasimha-diksha *see* nrisimha-diksha
Narasimhavarman (Narasiṃhavarman) Mamalla (ca. 630–668), fourth ruler in Pallava line after the founder, Nandivarman
Narasimhavarman Rajasimha (Narasiṃhavarman Rājasimha) II (700–728) Shaiva ruler of Kanchipuram
Narayana (Nārāyaṇa) God as Supreme Self; rishi who remembers
narayanakavacha mantra (*nārāyaṇakavaca mantra*) mantra of protection
narayanaparayanah (*nārāyaṇaparāyaṇāḥ*) those for whom Narayana is the last, supreme resort
Narayanastra (Nārāyaṇāstra) Narayana's arrow or mantra
***Narayana Upanishad* (*Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*)** contains many important mantras, including the Gayatri
narendra "Indra of men"
nashana (*naśana*) destruction, loss
Nayanar (Nāyaṉār) (T) Tamil Shaiva poet-saint
nenchu (*nencu*) (T) heart, center
Nenmeli (Neṉmeli) (T) town north of Kuram
Netiyon (Neṭiyōn) (T) Bhagavan as the "long one"
Netumal (T) the "tall Vishnu"
Netuvayil (Neṭuvāyil) (T) site of a battle to win Nandivarman the throne
nih-sparshah (*niḥ-sparśaḥ*) free from contact with sensual objects
nih-sprihah (*niḥ-spṛhaḥ*) not possessing longing
nil (*nīḷ*) (T) tall, deep
Nimi king of Mithila in Videha
Nimlochani (Nimlocanī) Varuna's city, in the west
nirodha reclining position; constraint; confined mode
Nirriti (Nirṛti) "Disorder"; born of Brahma's anus, dwells in the southwest
nirvana (*nirvāṇa*) "extinction"
nishchayan (*niścayan*) conviction
nishada (*niṣada*) sit down
nishkala (*niśkalā*) without parts
nityodita ever-manifest

nivasa (*nivāsa*) abode
nivritti (*nivṛtti*) nonprocreation
niyama discipline
Nriga (Nṛga) father of Sumati
Nripatungavarman (Nṛpatungavarman) (ca. 854–880) son of Nandivarman III by Sankha
Nrisimha (Nṛsiṁha) God as Man-lion, Narasimha
nrisimha-diksha (*nṛsiṁha-dīkṣā*) Man-lion Consecration
nrisimhanushtubh mantra (*nṛsiṁhānuṣṭubh mantra*) Man-lion mantra in the anushtubh meter
***Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishad* (*Nṛsiṁha-tāpaniya Upaniṣad*)** upanishad belonging to the *Atharva Veda*
nyasa (*nyāsa*) gesture of the right hand used to place Sudarshana in mantra form on various parts of the body
nyasamudra (*nyāsamudrā*) mudra of trust; the hand is open, but the middle finger bends downward to the palm
***Om* (*Oṃ*)** the "High Chant, "the quintessence of all essences"
***Om namo narayanaya* (*Oṃ namo nārāyaṇāya*)** the "eight-syllable mantra"
oshadhi (*oṣadhi*) an annual plant, not perennial
pada, padam foot, footstep; realm
Padapadmamakarandanishevana (Padapadmamakarandaniṣevaṇa) "Approaching (lit. Worshiping) the Honey of the (or His) Lotus Feet"
padma lotus
Padmabrahma (Padmabrahmā) Brahma born in a lotus
Padmanabha (Padmanābha) eleventh vyuha of Vasudeva, "He who has a lotus at his navel"
padmanidhimudra (*padmanidhimudrā*) "lotus treasure mudra"; the left hand faces toward the right, little finger stands up, the remaining fingers curl, and the tips of the forefinger and thumb touch
Padma Kalpa (*Pādma Kalpa*) a previous cycle in the life of Brahma
***Padma-samhita* (*Pādma-saṁhitā*)** a samhita of the Pancharatra Agama
Padmavati (Padmāvatī) Vishvasphurji's capital, Ujjaini
pakhanda (*pākhaṇḍa*) imposter, heretic
Palar (Pālar) River river in Pallava realm, also called Payasvini River, on which Kanchipuram stands
Pallava Dynasty ruled from Kanchipuram, 4th–9th centuries
Palluvettaraiyar (Paḻuvēṭṭaraiyar) (T) royal family of Nandivarman III's wife Kandan Marampavaiyar
pampu (*pāmpu*) (T) cobra, snake
Pampurnatu (Pāmpūrnāṭu) (T) "country of Cobra (or Snake) Village," region of Nandipuram near Kumbhakonam
panam (*pāṉam*) liquor, drink
Panchajanya (Pāñcajanya) Krishna's conch
panchamakara (*pañcamakāra*) the five "M-words," the Tantric "sacraments"
panchamukhalinga (*pañcamukhaliṅga*) Linga of Five Faces
pancharatra (*pañcarātra*) five nights; (cap.) name of a Vaishnava sect

Pancharatra Agama (Pāñcarātra Āgama) the tradition with Bhagavata Dharma that teaches the four vyuhas and their worship revealed by the Bhagavan Narayana Vasudeva for devotees during the Kali Yuga. Its individual texts, called samhita, tantra, and agama, preserve rites for the worship of God in images (*murti*), icons (*archa*), mandalas, temples, and consecrations (*diksha*) to a disciplined mode of life (*sadhana*), and the use of mantras, mudras, nyasa, and dhyana in worshiping on behalf of oneself or on behalf of others. Among the Pancharatra texts relevant to this temple are: *Padma-samhita*, *Satvata-samhita*, *Jayakhya-samhita*, *Paushkara-samhita*, *Paramesvara-samhita*, and *Ahirbudhya-samhita*.

panchavarsika (*pāñcavarsika*) quinquennial

panchavriksha (*pāñcavṛkṣa*) five (wish-fulfilling) trees

Pandava (Pāṇḍava; T: Pāṇḍavan) five brothers, sons of Yudhisthira, allied with Krishna in the *Mahabharata* war

Pandavatutar (Pāṇḍavatūtar) (T) temple of Krishna as Messenger of the Pandavas in Kanchipuram

Pandya (Pāṇḍya; T: Pāṇḍyan) Dynasty rulers based in Madurai, 6th century onward

Pani (Paṇi) type of asura who lives in Rasa, or who lives in a hole like a snake

paninta (*paṇinta*) (T) serves

Pankuni (Paṅkuṉi) (T) twelfth Tamil month (March-April)

pantaranka white ashes

papa (*pāpa*) evil, sin

papiyasin (*pāpiyasin*) worst of sins

papman (*pāpman*) constituted of sin

para, parama supreme

parabrahmanya (*parabrāmaṇya*) piously devoted to Brahmins

parama Bhagavata (*parama Bhāgavata*) Supreme Bhagavata; "Bhagavan's Supreme Slave"

paramahamsa (*paramahaṃsa*) "supreme goose"; a radical renouncer

paramaheshvara (*paramaheśvara*) supreme Maheshvara

parama mahapurusha (*parama mahāpuruṣa*) the Supremely Transcendent Person

parama japya (*parama jāpya*) supreme prayer

paramapada transcendent realm

paramapurusha (*paramapuruṣa*) Supreme Person

paramatman (*paramātman*) God as Supreme Self

paramavaishnava (*paramavaiṣṇava*) supreme devotee of Vishnu

paramecchuravinnagaram (*paramēccuraviṇṇagaram*) (T) "Emperor's Vishnu-house"

parameshvara (*parameśvara*) Imperial Architect

Parameshvaravarman (Parameśvaravarman) I (ca. 672–700) first Shaiva ruler of Pallava realm

Parameshvaravarman (Parameśvaravarman) II (ca. 728–731) fourth and last Shaiva ruler of Pallava realm

parameshvara-vishnugriham (*parameśvara-viṣṇugṛham*) "Emperor's Vishnu-house"

parampara (*paramparā*) tradition

paramtapas (*paraṃtapas*) "he who possesses the supreme heat that defeats the foe"

parantavan (*parantavaṉ*) (T) same as paramtapas

pararthapuja (*parārthapūjā*) worship for the benefit of others

Parashara (Parāśara) sage who learned the *Bhagavatam* from Sankhyayana
parashu (*paraśu*) axe
Parashurama (Paraśurāma) seventh avatara of Vishnu, "Rama with an axe"
Parijata (Pārijāta) coral tree from the Milk Ocean, a granter of all desires
Parikshit (Parīkṣit) king to whom Shuka relates the *Bhagavata Purana*
parishuddha (*pariśuddha*) thoroughly purified
paroksha (*parokṣa*) "invisible language"; lit. "beyond the range of the senses"
parokshvada (*parokṣvāda*) "doctrine of the invisible"
Parshvanatha (Pārśvanātha) the twenty-third Jaina tirthankara
partha (*pārtha*) twelve sacred texts attributed to Prithu
Parthavasekharapuram (T) town near Trivandram
Parvati (Pārvatī) "The Mountain's Daughter"; Shiva's consort
pashumarana (*paśumarana*) animal victim in a sacrifice
Pashupata (Pāśupata) Shaiva sect
Pashupatam (Pāśupatam) weapon given by Shiva to Arjuna
patakam (*pāṭakam*) (T) street or section (of a town); (cap.) pre-Pallava Bhagavata temple
Patala (Pātāla) the deepest part of Rasa, naga realm ruled by Vasuki
Paundraka (Pauṇḍraka) ally with Shishupala et al. against Krishna
***Paushkara-samhita* (*Pauṣkara-saṁhitā*)** a samhita of the Pancharatra Agama
payasa (*pāyasa*) milk-rice
Payasvini (Payasvinī) River *see* Palar River
payovrata "milk vow"; "liquids vow"
Periyalvar (Periyāḻvār) (T) Alvar also known as Vishnuchittan
Periyar (Periyār; T: periya-āṟu) River "great river," in Kerala
***Periya Tirumoli* (*Periya Tirumoḻi*) (T)** large anthology by Tirumangai Alvar
Perumanatikal (Perumānṭikal) (T) "Venerable Slave of Bhagavan"; Nandivarman's title as a Bhagavata refugee
peruntaccan (*peruntaccaṉ*) (T) Master Architect
peti (*pēdi*) (T) a man with the predominant characteristics of a woman
Pey (Pēy) (T) Alvar connected with the Pallava Dynasty
phala fruit, results
Phalguna (Phālguna) twelfth Sanskrit month (February-March)
pinda (*piṇḍa*) ball of rice or flour offered to pitris
Pingala (Piṅgalā) a courtesan saved by Krishna
Pinnai (Piṉṉai or Nappiṉṉai) (T) a bride of Krishna
pishacha (*piśāca*) ghoul
pitri (*pitṛ*) "father"; ancestors, ancestral manes
pitriganadhipati (*pitṛgaṇādhipati*) overlord of the ancestors
pitriraja (*pitṛrāja*) king of the ancestors
Plaksha (Plakṣa) the first continent beyond Jambhu
Ponkal (Poṅkal) (T) festival of winter solstice, 23 days after the actual solstice
poshana (*poṣaṇa*) "nourishing"; protection of refugees
Potalaka mountain where Avalokiteshvara sits
Poykai (Poikai) (T) Alvar connected with the Pallava Dynasty

Prabala "Powerful"; asura who gave his body as sacrifice; also a personal attendant of Bhagavan
Prabhasa (Prabhāsa) "Glittering" or "Splendor"; asura who visited Patala to aid Suryaprabha; also the place where Yadavas destroyed themselves, and where the Kali Yuga began
Pracheta "The Attentive"; one of the ten sons of Prachinabarhis
Prachinabarhis (Prācīnabarhis) "Eastern Light"; king who ruled during Daksha's sacrifice
pradakshina (*pradakṣiṇā*) moving around an object clockwise in veneration
pradhana (*pradhāna*) primordial substratum of matter; essence
Pradyumna Pre-eminently Mighty, one of the vyuhas of God; Kama, born to Krishna and Rukmini as their son
Pragjyotishpura (Prāgjyotiṣpura) "City of Eastern Light," Naraka's capital
Prahlada (Prahlāda) "Delight," asura son of Hiranyakashipu, devotee of Krishna
prajapati (*prajāpati*) "master of progeny"
prajna (*prajña*) wisdom; enstasy of steady insight
prakamya (*prākāmya*) irresitible will, freedom of will
prakara (*prākāra*) the wall(s) enclosing a garbhagriha on all four sides
prakasha (*prakāśa*) light, splendor
prakriti (*prakṛti*) matter
pramoda thrill
Pralamba demon in the guise of a cowherd boy
prana (*prāṇa*) life-breath
pranamaya (*prāṇamaya*) made of life-breath
pranasanshita (*prāṇasaṅśita*) "one whose life breath is sharpened"
pranava (*praṇava*) *Om* or *Aum*
pranayama (*prāṇāyama*) to "stretch the breath out"; disciplined breath control
prapanna refugee; one who has taken refuge, completely dependent on God
prapatti taking refuge in God
prapti (*prāpti*) the power of attaining or realizing anything
prasada (*prasāda*) God's grace; the "leftovers" of an offering
prasavya "turned to the left"; counterclockwise
prashasti (*praśasti*) Sanskrit praise poem
pratichi cha mahanadi (*pratīcī ca mahānadī*) "great river flowing eastward"
pravritti (*pravṛtti*) ancient creativity
Prayaga (Prayāga) modern Allahabad
prayaschitta (*prayascitta)* rites of purification
prayoga "the hurling of missiles"; rites performed for practical goals
preta "the departed"; a disembodied soul
Prishni (Pṛśni) "Ray-of-Light"; the mother of Maruts; cow that gives milk once a year
Prishnigarbha (Pṛśnigarbha) "Embryo of the Dappled One and Ray-of-Light"; son of Brahma and Aditi
Pritha (Pṛthā) Vasudeva's sister, also called Kunti
Prithu (Pṛthu), "Expansive"; the first king, part of Hari, created from Vena's arms; also father of Arjuna
prithvi (*pṛthvī*) earth

Prithvipati (Prithvīpati) I ruler of the Gangas in Karnataka
priti (*prīti*) love
priya love for God; pleasure; beloved
Priyavrata son of Svayambhuva Manu, brother of Uttanapada
puja (*pūjā*) worship
Pulaha a prajapati, born of Brahma's navel
Pulastya a prajapati, born of Brahma's ear
pulkasa tribals
puman (*pumān*) man; person
Pumpatakam (Pūmpāṭakam) (T) "the prosperous section," area of Kanchipuram
pumshchali (*puṃścalī*) harlot
pundra (*puṇḍra*) forehead mark of consecrated Bhagavata
Punyajanalayam (Puṇyajanālayam) Realm of the Meritorious, where Uttama was killed
purana (*purāṇa*) collection of ancient lore
puranataka (*puranāṭaka*) victory dance (of Pradyumna)
Purattachi (Puraṭṭāci) (T) sixth Tamil month (September-October)
purnam (*pūrṇam*) fullness
Purodhasa Brahmin who consecrated Krishna and Balarama as "twice-born"
purohita family priest
Purujit Yudhisthira's maternal uncle
Purukutsa son of Mandhata
Pururavas (Purūravas) son of Budha and Ila, progenitor of Lunar Dynasty
purusha (*puruṣa*) person
purushartha (*puruṣārtha*) aims of human life
purushasukta (*puruṣasukta*) hymn describing the Supreme Soul of the universe
Purushottama (Puruṣottama) Supreme Person
purva (*pūrva*) prior
Purvachitti (Pūrvacitti) apsaras wife of Aghnidra
Pushkara (Puṣkara) "Lotus"; the outermost continent
Pushpabhadra (Puṣpabhadra) river by Markandeya's ashram
Pushya (Puṣya) a constellation or star
Pushya (Pūṣya) tenth Sanskrit month (December-January)
Putam (Pūtam) (T) Alvar connected with the Pallava Dynasty
putra son
Puvanimanikka (Puvaṉimaṇikka) (T) temple named in an inscription of Rajakesarivarman
raga (*rāga*) passion
Raghava Rama (Rāghava Rāma) the eighth avatara of Vishnu
***Rahasyatrayasara* (*Rahasyatrayasāra*) (T)** "Essence of the Threefold Secret" by Vedanta Deshika
rahasya uttama, rahasyottama the supreme secret
Rahu (Rāhu) head of the asura Svarbhanu, severed by Sudarshana, said to eat the moon in an eclipse
Raivata son of Priyavrata, ruler of fifth Manu Term
raja (*rāja*) king, ruler

rajadhirajaparameshvara (*rājādhirājaparameśvara*) King of Kings and Supreme Ruler
Rajanya (Rājanya) Krishna as King
rajas passion
rajasika energetic
Rajasimha (Rājasimha) *see* Narasimhavarman Rajasimha
rajasimheshvara koyil (*rājasiṁheśvara kōyil*) (T) "temple of Rajasimha, the Lord"
rajasuya (*rājasūya*) the "rites of engendering a king"; royal consecration rite
raksha (*rakṣa*) protection
rakshasa (*rākṣasa*) night-stalking demon
rakta red
Rama (Rāma) "Pleasing," exiled king of Ayodhya, hero of the *Ramayana*
Rama (Ramā) Goddess "Charming"; Lakshmi
rama-krida (*rāmā-krīḍā*) "dear one," epithet of Shri
Ramanaka (Ramaṇaka) island home of Kaliya; also one of the rulers of Pushkara
Ramanuja (Rāmānuja) Shri Vaishnava theologian, 11th century
***Ramayana* (*Rāmāyaṇa*)** epic story of King Rama and his wife Sita
Ramyaka region of Jambu north of Ilavrita
Rantideva Brahmin who always gave away his food
rasa liquid, sap, juice, flavor, taste; aesthetic sentiment
Rasa, Rasatala (Rasātala) "Taste"; the dark waters beneath Earth
rasalila (*rāsalīlā*) the great circle dance
Rashtrakuta (Rāṣṭrakūṭa) Dynasty ruled in Deccan, 8th–10th centuries
rati intense pleasure
ratra (*rātra*) night
Ravana (Rāvaṇa) rakshasa ruler of Lanka
retas semen
Reva (Rēvā) wife of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, daughter of Dantidurga
Revati (Revatī) wife of Balarama
Ribhu (Ṛbhu) a class of devas
riddhi (*ṛddhi*) lordliness
***Rig Veda* (*Ṛg Veda*)** oldest of the four Vedas
Riksha (Ṛkṣa) mountain range in eastern Vindhyas
Rishabha (Ṛṣabha) avatara of Vasudeva, born as son of Nabhi
rishi (*ṛṣi*) seer
rita (*ṛta*) true order
ritu (*ṛtu*) season; period of a woman's monthly cycle favorable for conception
Rochana (Rocana) wife of Aniruddha
Rohini (Rohiṇī) Vasudeva's wife in Gokula, from whom Balarama was born
Rohita son of Harishchandra
romaharsha (*romaharṣa*) gooseflesh
Romaharshana (Romaharṣaṇa) father of Ugrashrava; suta who heard the *Bhagavata Purana*
Rudra "Howler"; an early, and continuing, name of Shiva
Rudra(s) sons of Rudra, beings in the atmosphere
rudraksha (*rudrākṣa*) berries used as beads worn by devotees of Shiva
Rukmavati (Rukmavatī) wife of Pradyumna

Rukmī Rukmini's brother
Rukmini (Rukmiṇī) Krishna's first wife
rupa (*rūpa*) shape, form
rupani divyani (*rupāṇi divyāni*) divine shapes
Sadashiva (Sadāśiva) Shiva as "Ever-Auspicious"
sad-bheda differentiated
sadhaka (*sādhaka*) consecrated devotee
sadhana (*sādhanā*) disciplined way of life
sadhu (*sādhu*) (n) a holy man, an ascetic; (adj) good
sadhya (*sādhya*) "means of realization"; accomplished beings
Sadyojata (Sadyojāta) one of the "five faces" of Shiva
Sagara (*Sāgara*) Ocean; also sponsor of horse sacrifice that results in descent of Ganga
Sahadeva "Mighty Deva"; son of Jarasandha; youngest of the five Pandavas
sahasranama (*sahasranāma*) the thousand names (of God)
Saka (Sāka) the sixth dvipa from the center
sakala (*sakalā*) having parts
salokya (*sālokya*) dwelling with God in His Highest Home, a form of mukti
Salva (Sālva) ally of Shishupala et al.
sama (*sāma*) discipline of the mind, equanimity
Sama* (*Sāma*) *Veda the third Veda, containing hymns chanted in the Soma sacrifice
samadhi (*samādhi*) enstasy; perfect absorption of mind
samagama (*samāgama*) association (as with sadhus)
sama samana equivalent
Samba (Sāmba) Krishna's son by Jambavati
sambandha (*saṃbandha*) kinship
samdhya (*saṃdhyā*) juncture between yugas; twilight; (cap.) the goddess Twilight
samhita (*saṃhitā*) collection of hymns or other subject matter of the Vedas
Samkarshana (Saṁkarṣaṇa) the Plower, a vyuha of Bhagavan; also called Ananta
samkarshanamaha (*saṁkarṣaṇamaha*) drawing the one who sees and the object seen together into the "I"
samkhya (*saṁkhya*) metaphysical calculation
samraj (*saṃrāj*) universal sovereignty
samsara (*saṃsāra*) the world of death and rebirth
samskara (*saṃskāra*) life-cycle sacrament
samshlesha (*saṃśleṣa*) copulation
Samtana (Saṃtāna) one of the pancha-vrikshas
Samudra Ocean
samudraghosha (*samudraghoṣa*) the voice of the sea
Samvarta "Dissolution"; son of Aurva, who teaches him the *Jayakhya-samhita*
samvatsara (*saṃvatsara*) solar year
Samyamani (Saṁyamanī) Yama's city, in the south
Sanaka "Ancient"; mind-born son of Brahma
Sanandana "Joyful"; mind-born son of Brahma
Sanatana (Sanātana) "Eternal"; mind-born son of Brahma; also a part of Vishnu's realm

Sanatkumara (Sanatkumāra) "Ever Young"; mind-born son of Brahma
sanga (*saṅga*) clinging; an assembly
Sangam period period of early Tamil literature, from ca. 200 BCE to ca. 200 CE
sankalpa (*saṅkalpa*) intent
Sankarshana (Saṅkarṣaṇa) Samkarshana
Sankha (Saṅkhā) wife of Nandivarman III
Sankhyayana (Sāṅkhyāyana) sage who learned the *Bhagavatam* from Sanatkumara
sankirtana (*saṅkīrtana*) chanting or singing of God in a group
sannyasa (*saṁnyāsa*) renunciation
sannyasin (*saṁnyāsin*) renouncer
sant a renouncer who possesses an intellect (*buddhi*) that perceives Krishna and therefore knows *brahman*
sapinda (*sapiṇḍa*) part of the same line of descent or ascent
Sarama (Saramā) female dog who is Indra's mesenger
Sarasvati (Sarasvatī) knowledge as a goddess; also a river
Sarayu (Sarayū) river into which Asamanjasa threw children
sarga creation; emanation of Brahma
sarpa snake
sarupa (*sārūpa*) a form of mukti in which one's shape is God's shape
sarva-ishvara, sarveshvara (*sarva-īśvara, sarveśvara*) ruler of everything
sarvamedha sacrifice of everything
sarvasya adhipati (*sarvasya adhipati*) overlord of all
sat being
sati (*satī*) a virtuous woman, "truly herself"; (cap.) "True Wife"; daughter of Daksha, wife of Rudra Shiva
satsanga (*satsaṅga*) "clinging to the true"; association with those who have "true being"; "clinging to sants"
satsankalpa (*satsaṅkalpa*) true resolve
satshraddhaya (*satśraddhāya*) through faith in the "true"
sattra (*sāttra*) thousand-year sacrifice
sattva purity; clarity
Satvatas (Sātvatas) descendants in the Vrishni clan of Satvat, famous for including Krishna and Balarama; also refers to Bhagavatas, specifically those following Pancharatra sadhanas, such as those prescribed in the *Satvata-samhita*
***Satvata-samhita* (*Sātvata-saṃhitā*)** a Pancharatra scripture
satya truth; true being
Satya (Satyā) Krishna's sixth wife
Satyabhama (Satyabhāmā) "True Luster"; wife of Krishna
Satyaloka "Realm of True Being," Brahma's abode; one of the worlds beyond Dhruva
Satyavrata "Of True Vows"; name of a wicked prince
Satya Yuga the first of the great ages
Saubha aerial car owned by Shalva
Saubhari sage who cursed Garuda
saucha (*sauca*) purification
Saunaka seer in *Bhagavata Purana*

Sautramani (Sautrāmaṇī) sacrifice to regenerate the patron after a Soma sacrifice
Savana son of Priyavrata
Savarni (Sāvarṇi) the eighth and next Manu of this kalpa
sayujya (*sāyujya*) "yoking with God"
Sendraka Dynasty rulers subordinate to the early Chalukyas from the 6th century
setu boundary; causeway, embankment
sevakan (T; Skt: *sevaka*) attendant
shabda (*śabda*) sound
Shabdabrahma (Śabdabrahma) Brahma born of Sound
Shaiva (Śaiva) worshiper of Shiva
Shaiva Agama (Śaiva Āgama) traditions of ritual practices revealed by Shiva for devotees in the Kali Yuga but including different systems. Most relevant to Kanchipuram in the seventh and eighth centuries are Shaiva Agamas or Tantras that teach the worship of *brahman* as pati (master) and worship of the Shiva linga as Pashupati. Three of these traditions are known as Maheshvara, Pashupati, and Kapalika.
Shaiva Siddhanta (Śaiva Siddhānta) a school of philosophy
Shakra (Śakra) Buddhist designation for Indra
shakti (*śakti*) power; the potency to create and delude; maya
Shakuntala (Śakuntalā) mother of Emperor Bharata
Shakyamuni (Śakyamuṇi) the Buddha
Shalmala (Śālmala) the continent immediately surrounding Plaksha
Shambara (Śambara) ally of Kamsa
Shambhala (Śambhala) village where Kalki will be born
Shambhu (Śambhu) "The Benevolent"; Shiva
Shamyaprasa (Śamyāprāsa) hermitage on the Sarasvati River
Shanda (Śaṇḍa) son of Shukra and one of Prahlada's teachers
Shandilya (Śāṇḍilya) Brahmin to whom Narada tells the *Jayakhya-samhita*
Shandipani (Śāndīpani) a sage from Kashi living in Avanti, guru of Krishna and Balarama
Shankara (Śaṅkara) founder of Advaita Vedanta, mid-8th century
shankha (*śaṅkha*) conch
Shankhachuda (Śaṅkhacūḍa) attendant of Kubera slain by Krishna
sharana (*śaraṇa*) refuge
sharira (*śarīra*) material body
Shasta (Śāstā) "Punisher," "Ruler," or "Teacher"; Kalki
shastra (*śāstra*) "system"; text of teachings; instrument
Shatadruji (Śatadrujī) daughter of Ocean, mother of the Prachetas
***Shatapatha Brahmana* (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*)** text describing Vedic ritual, associated with the *Yajur Veda*
Shatarupa (Śatarūpā) wife of Svayambhuva Manu
Shatrughati (Śatrughāti) son of Shatrughna
Shatrughna (Śatrughna) brother of Rama
Shaunaka (Śaunaka) sage sacrificing in frame story of *Bhagavata Purana*
Shesha (Śeṣa) "Remainder," Balarama
Shibi (Śibi) king who gave his body to feed a hawk

shibika (*śibikā*) palanquin
shila (*śīla*) virtuous conduct
shila (*śilā)* stone
shilpin (*śilpin*) builder, architect
Shishumara (Śiśumāra) the Crocodile Constellation; Dhruva's father-in-law
Shishupala (Śiśupāla) "Child-protector"; Chedi king killed by Krishna at Yudhisthira's rajasuya
Shiva (Śiva) "Auspicious"; a great god
shivoktena margena (*śivoktena mārgena*) by means of the path taught by Shiva
shraddha (*śraddhā*) faith; rites of the dead; (cap.) wife of Shraddhadeva
Shraddhadeva (Śrāddhadeva) "Faith's Deva," ruler of the seventh Manu Term
shramana (*śramana*) "exertion on oneself"; acetic, esp. Buddhist monk
shramana vatarashana (*śrāmanā vātarāśanāḥ*) "ascetics clothed in the wind," nine sons of Rishabha
Shrauta (Śrauta) related to Vedic tradition; rites performed in public
Shravana (Śrāvaṇa) fifth Sanskrit month (July-August)
Shravasta (Śrāvasta) residence of Lava, son of Rama
Shri (Śrī) "Majesty"; goddess of good fortune
Shri Dandi (Śrī Dandi) son of Pallavamalla's master architect
Shridhara (Śrīdhara) "Bearer of Majesty"; vyuha of Vasudeva
Shri Goshtipuram (Śrī Goṣṭhipuram) Sanskrit name for Tirukottiyur
***Shrīmad Bhagavata Purana* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*)** see *Bhagavata Purana*
Shrimara Shrivallabha (Śrīmāṟṟa Śrīvallabha) (r. 815–862) Pandyan ruler, son of Varagunavarman I, ally of Nripatungavarman
shrimat (*śrīmat*) prosperous and majestic
Shrinatha (Śrīnātha) monist-cum-dualist tradition of the Shaiva Agama
shri-parameshvara-mahakashtakaran (*śrī-parameśvara-mahākāṣṭkāran*) "The Majestic Emperor's Master Woodworker"
Shri Patra (Śrī Patra) conch shell used as amrita pot in Tantric rite
Shrisukta (*śrīsukta*) one of the hymns of the Rig Veda
Shrivaramangala (Śrīvaramaṅgala) location of copper plates, c. 770
Shrivatsa (Śrīvatsa) "Majesty's favorite"; Lakshmi's abode in a curl of hair on Hari's breast
Shriveli Vishnugriha (Śrīveḷi Viṣṇugṛha) temple in Uttaramerur
shruta (*śruta*) heard
shruti (*śruti*) "that which is heard"; the Vedas
Shubhra (Śubhra) sage, father of Vaikuntha
shuddhasattva (*śuddhasattva*) pure clarity, or pure material being
Shudra (Śūdra) the fourth ritual caste, traditionally servants
Shuka (Śuka) "Parrot"; teacher of *Bhagavata Purana* to Parikshit
shukla (*śukla*) white
Shukra (Śukra) "Bright," the planet Venus; Hiranyakashipu's purohita
Shunahshepa (Śunaḥśepa) victim tied to the stake in Harischandra's rajasuya
shunya (*śūnya*) empty
Shurasena (Śūrasena) former chief of Yadus, and his territory
Shurpanakha (Śūrpaṇakhā) sister of Ravana, spurned by Rama

Shvetadvipa (Śvetadvīpa) White Island in the Ocean of Milk
shyama (*śyāma*) dark, black or dark blue
siddha perfected; being who has achieved release
siddhamritarasa (*siddhāmṛtarasa*) "magical amrita liquid"
siddhi success
Siddhipada Realm of Success
Simhavarman (Siṃhavarman) II Bhagavata ruler of Kanchipuram (ca. 535–560) son of Nandivarman, the founder of the linege
Simhavishnuvarman (Siṃhaviṣṇuvarman) Bhagavata ruler (ca. 560–580), grandson of Nandivarman, the founder of the lineage
Sindhu Ocean
Sita (Sītā) wife of Rama, abducted by Ravana
Skanda "spurting"; frustrated desire, master of deva warlords; son of Shiva; *also* Skandasishya Vikramavarman
Skandasishya Vikramavarman Nandivarman Pallavamalla's rival for the throne
sneha affection
soma sacred drink, central to the Soma Sacrifice; (cap.) the Moon
Sri Vaishnava (Śrī Vaiṣṇava) sect of Vaishnavas, originating in the poems of the Alvars
sthairya constancy
sthana (*sthāna*) maintenance of order
sthulasharira (*sthūlaśarīra*) gross material body
stupa (*stūpa*) Buddhist reliquary shrine
Subahu (Subāhu) son of Shatrughna; brother of Alarka
Subandhu author of *Vasavadatta*, mid-7th century
Subhadra (Subhadrā) daughter of Vasudeva and Devaki, married to Arjuna
Sudakshina (Sudakṣiṇa) Excellent Right Hand or Virtuous South
Sudama (Sudāmā) garland-maker in Mathura
Sudarshana (Sudarśana) "beautiful to see"; Krishna's discus
Sudyumna son of Shraddhadeva, changed from daughter Ila
Sugriva (Sugrīva) king of the monkeys
sukha happiness
sukshma (*sūkṣma*) subtle
sukshma-diksha (*sūkṣma-dīkṣā*) "Consecration to the Subtle"
sukshma sharira (*sūkṣma śarīra*) subtle material body
sukta (*sūkta*) Vedic hymn of praise
Sumali (Sumāli) asura slain by Vishnu; Ravana's grandfather
Sumati descendent of Bharata; seventh Jaina tirthankara; *see also* Jada Sumati
Sumitra (Sumitrā) one of Dasharatha's three wives
Sunanda "Delighting"; chief of Vamana's attendants, the eldest Kumara
Sundaravarada Bhattachari, M. R. priest of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple
Sundaravarada Perumal (Sundaravaradā Perumāḷ) Temple (T) the Shriveli Vishnugriha in Uttaramerur
Sundaravaratha Pattachari (T) *see* M. R. Sundaravarada Bhattachari
Suniti (Sunīti) mother of Dhruva
sura (*surā*) liquor

Surabhi "Fragrance"; the mother of all cattle; Kamadhenu
surasava (*surāsava*) beer or liquor
Surasena (Sūrasena) name of a people ruled by Chitraketu
Suratha son of Surya; as Savarni, ruler of the eighth Manu Term
Suruchi (Suruci) second wife of Uttanapada
Surya (Sūrya) the Sun
Suryaprabha (Sūryaprabha) hero aided by Prabhasa
sushumna (*suṣumnā*) channel of the subtle body that parallels the spine
sushupta, sushupti (*suṣupta, suṣupti*) deep dreamless sleep
Suta (Sūta) "Charioteer," narrator of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
Sutala the "auspicious level" of Rasa, the underworld, ruled by Bali
Sutapa (Sutapā) a prajapati who lived with Prishni in the last sarga
Suyajna (Suyajña) dead ruler whose wives appeal to Yama
svabhava (*svabhāva*) essential nature
svadhyaya the rite of study after the main meal of the day
svapna dreaming, a dream
Svarbhanu (Svarbhānu) asura who drank a portion of amrita
svarga heaven
Svarloka (Svārloka) Heaven with the constellations and planets
Svarochisha (Svārociṣa) ruler of the second Manu Term
svarthapuja (*svarthapūjā*) worship for one's own benefit
svarupa (*svarūpa*) one's own shape
svasukha one's own pleasure
svayam oneself
Svayambhuva (Svāyambhuva) the previous sarga
Svayambhuva Manu (Svāyambhuva Manu) son of Brahma, father of Priyavrata
Svetambara (Svētāmbara) Jaina sect
Syamantaka jewel stolen from Krishna and regained
Tai (T) tenth Tamil month (January-February)
***Taittiriya Upanishad* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*)** a major upanishad, associated with the *Black Yajur Veda*
Takshaka (Takṣaka) "Cutter"; deadly snake Parikshit is cursed to be bitten by
tamas darkness; ignorance; delusion as a mode of consciousness
Tamasa (Tāmasa) son of Priyavrata, ruler of fourth Manu Term
tamastivra (*tamastīvra*) thick darkness
tamisra (*tāmisra*) darkness as a mode of consciousness
Tamraparni (Tāmiraparaṇī) River river in the Pandya realm, also called Porunal
tandava (*tāṇḍava*, T: *tāṇṭavam*) dance of victory
Tanjavur, Thanjavur (Tanjavūr, Tañcāvūr) (T) city on the Kaveri River
tanmatra (*tanmātra*) the five subtle elements; the five senses
tantiram (T) Tantra
Tantra (Tāntra) body of texts, recording non-Vedic revelation; practices based on these texts
tantrantara (*tantrāntara*) the essence of Tantra
tantrantariya (*tantrāntarīya*) samkhyan philosophers who practice tantrantara
tanu (*tanū*) form, body

tapa branding rite
tapas heat-generating austerity
Tapoloka one of the worlds beyond Dhruva
Tara (Tārā) Bhagavata: wife of Moon, mother of Budha; Buddhist: consort of Avalokiteshvara and "mother" to the Shakyamuni as a buddha.
Tarandikonda Bhojar (T) agamika of Hiranya, Nandivarman Pallavamalla's father
Taravaloka (Tāravaloka) a prince
Tatpurusha (Tatpuruṣa) one of the "five faces" of Shiva
tattva one of the five traditionally distinguished elementary substances
tattvamudra (*tattvamudrā*) gesture in which the thumb and index finger touch and three fingers are extended
tattvasrishtimudra (*tattvasṛṣṭimudrā*) "emanation of the constituents" mudra; the forefinger is raised up and other fingers curl down over the thumb bent to the palm
Tayar (Tāyar) (T) Sri Lakshmi
tejas brilliance; "brilliant conquering power"
tenkurukur nampi (*teṉkurukūr nampi*) (T) "The Venerable One of Southern Kurukur"; epithet of an Alvar, Maran Chatakopan
tin chilai (*tiṇ cilai*) (T) hard stone image; firm bow
tirtha (*tīrtha*) place of pilgrimage; also, a sadhaka
tirthankara (*tīrthaṅkara*) "ford-crosser"; exalted Jain teacher
tirthika (*tīrthika*) heretic, from Buddhist point of view
tiru (T) majesty; equivalent of Skt. shri
Tirukkottiyur (Tirukkōttiyūr) (T) town east of Madurai
Tirumal (Tirumāl) (T) Vasudeva with Devi, in early Tamil poetry
Tirumangai (Tirumaṅgai) Alvar also known as Kalikanri
***Tirumantiram muvayiram* (*Tirumantiram muvāyiram*) (T)** Tamil work, 7th–8th centuries
***Tiruppallantu* (*Tiruppallāṇṭu*) (T)** "Many Years," poem for Krishna by Vishnuchittan, Kotai's father
***Tiruppavai* (*Tiruppāvai*) (T)** Tamil poem by Kotai
tiruvanai (T) oath of majesty
***Tiruvantati* (*Tiruvantāti*) (T)** collection of poems by Poykai
titiksha (*titikṣa*) forbearance
totarntu (T) "seek out," "continue in unbroken succession"
Treta Yuga (Tretā Yuga) the second age of the grat cycle
tribhuvana three worlds of rebirth
triguna (*triguṇa*) tripartite process (of matter)
Trikuta (Trikūṭa; T: Tirikūṭa) mountain with "Three Peaks," known as Sveta Dvipa
trimurti (*trimūrti*) the Three Material Forms
Tripura "three cities," invisible vehicle built by Maya for the asuras
tripurantaka (*tripurāntaka*) destroyer of the Three Cities
Trishanku (Triśaṅku) father of Harishchandra
trishna (*tṛṣṇa*) craving
tritala-vimana (*tritala-vimāna*) three-storied palace
Trivandram (Tiruvaṉantapuram) city in modern Kerala
Trivakra (Trivakrā) woman who is "bent thrice," hunchback servant of Kamsa

Trivikrama God as the Dwarf, the "thrice-strider"
Tryambaka monist lineage of the Shaiva Agama
Tumburu a gandharva musician
turiya (*turīya*), turya the "fourth person"; the person who is aware, who resides in the heart
turyatita (*turīyātita*) "beyond the fourth (body)"; Narayana
Tushita (Tuṣita) "Heaven of the Delighted"
Tvashta (Tvaṣṭā) father of Vishvarupa
tyaga (*tyāga*) forsaking, abandoning
ubhyaganattayar (T) men of the two assemblies
ubhayakula-parishuddhar (*ubhayakula-pariśuddhar*) (T) purified in both clans
ubhaya "both"; perception of "two"
Ucchaishravas (Uccaiśravas) Indra's horse "of long ears" or "loud neighing"
udana (*udāna*) one of the vital breaths, in the throat and rising upward
Udayachandra (Udayacandra) Nandivarman's general
Uddhava Krishna's foremost counsellor and devotee
udgatri (*udgātṛ*) priest chanting *Sama Veda* verses in sacrifice
udritha (*udrītha*) the High Chant
Ugrasena rightful king of Mathura, Kamsa's father
Ugrashravas (Ugraśravas) Suta, the narrator of the *Bhagavata Purana*
Uma (Umā) Daksha's daughter, Shiva's consort on Mount Kailasa
upadana (*upādāna*) rites to gather materials for worship after sunrise
upadeshamudra (*upadeśamudrā*) the teaching mudra
upanishad (*upaniṣad*) "secret teaching"; texts attached to the Brahmanas and expounding the inner meanings of the Vedas
uparichara (*uparicara*) moving or walking above or in the air
upasana (*upāsanā*) worship
upaya (*upāya*) means; skill in means
Upendra "Younger to Indra"; Vamana, son of Aditi and Kashyapa
urai (T) commentary
Urakam (Ūrakam) (T) pre-Pallava temple to Trivikrama in Kanchipuram
urdhvamula (*ūrdhvamūla*) the root above (the ashvattham)
urdhvareta (*ūrdhvareta*) keeping the semen "above"; living in chastity
Urvashi (Urvaśī) apsaras born of Narayana's tapas, consort of Pururavas
Usha (Uṣā) daughter of the asura Bana
Ushanas (Uśanas) Shukra, asura acharya
Ushinara (Uśīnara) territory ruled by Suyajna
uti latent aspects of karma
uttama supreme; (cap.) son of Priyavrata and Suruchi
Uttamashloka (Uttamaśloka) "He of Most Excellent Renown"; "Highest Praise"
Uttānapāda father of Dhruva, brother of Priyavrata
uttara latter; left (side)
Uttaramerur (Uttaramērūr) (T) town south of Kanchipuram
uttara vedi raised altar at eastern end of a Vedic sacrificial arena
uttarayana (*uttarāyaṇa*) the light half of the year
Vach (Vāc) Speech, born of Brahma's mouth

vadha killing
vahana vehicle, deity's mount
vaidika of or related to Veda
vaidikatantika (*vaidikatāntika*) of or related to Veda and Tantra
Vaigai River *see* Kritamala River
Vaihayasa (Vaihāyasa) "Moving through the Air"; Bali's magical vehicle
Vaikachi (Vaikāci) (T) second Tamil month (May-June)
vaikhanasa (*vaikhānasa*) forest-dwelling ascetic, vanaprastha
Vaikhanasa Agama (Vaikhānasa Āgama) tradition, parallel to Pancharatra Agama
Vaikuntha (Vaikuṇṭha) Vishnu's heaven, on a mountain on White Island in the Ocean of Milk; also son of Shubhra, part manifestation of Hari
Vaikuntha Dhama (Vaikuṇṭha Dhāma) God as "home without ignorance" or "the presence penetrating everywhere" or "the invincible realm"
Vaikuntanatha (T: Vaikuntanātha; Skt: Vaikuṇṭhanātha) "Lord of Vaikuntha"; Bhagavan
Vaikuntha Perumal (Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ) temple built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla
vairagya (*vairāgya*) renunciation
vairaja purusha (*vairāja puruṣa*) "person born of viraj"
Vairochana (Vairocana) attributive founder of Vajrayana (Esoteric Buddhism)
Vaisakha (Vaisākha) second Sanskrit month (April-May)
Vaishampayana (Vaiśampayana) Vyasa Dvaipayana's disciple; Yajnavalkya is his disciple
Vaishnava (Vaiṣṇava) related to Viṣṇu and his worship
Vaishya (Vaiśya) third varna: tradesmen and other middling occupations
Vaivasvata son of the Sun; patronymic of Shraddhadeva
vajapeya (*vājapeya*) preparatory sacrifice patronized by Daksha
vajasani (*vājasani*) recensions of the yajus mantras taught to Yajnavalkya
vajirupa (*vajirūpa*) shape of a horse with a mane
vajra diamond bolt of lightning, an emblem of Krishna; means to success
vajramudra (*vajramudrā*) gesture in which the middle finger, the ring finger, and the little finger grasp the thumb, and the tip of the index finger touches the thumb's knuckle
Valin (Vālin) monkey king, son of Indra, slain by Rama
Valmiki (Vālmīki) attributive author of *Ramayana*
vamachara (*vāmācāra*) the "left-hand" way
Vamadeva (Vāmadeva) one of the "five faces" of Shiva
Vamana (Vāmana) God as Dwarf
vamsha (*vaṃṣa*) lineage
vanaprastha (*vānaprastha*) "forest dweller," the third stage of life for a brahman
Vanji (Vañci) Chera capital, also known as Karur
vannam (*vaṇṇam*) (T) varna: color; nature
varadamudra (*varadamudrā*) gesture of giving boons
Varadarajaswami (Varadarājaswāmi) hill-like temple for Vishnu
Varagunavarman (Varaguṇavarman) I (765–815) son of Maravaraman Rajasimha

Varagunavarman (Varaguṇavarman) II (ca. 862–885) Pandyan ruler, son of Shrimara Shrivallabha
Varaha (Varāha) Krishna as Boar
Varahagiri (Varāhagiri) western hill area of Tamil Nadu
Varana-indra (Varaṇa-indra) the elephant Airavata, "Indra of the invincible"
Vardhamana (Vardhamāna) Jina for whom a temple existed in Kanchipuram in the 6th century
vardhana prosperous increase
varman shield
varna (*varṇa*) ritual class; lit., color
varsha (*varṣa*) region (as of the Jambu continent)
Varuna (Varuṇa) deva emperor of asuras and nagas; dark night, worshiped with Mitra
Varuni (Vāruṇī) daughter of Varuna; sura (liquor)
varuna-pasa (*varuṇa-pāsa*) "noose of Varuna"; rope of darbha grass used to tie sacrificial victim
Vasavadatta Sanskrit romance, mid-7th century
vashita (*vaśitā*) subjugating by magic
Vasishtha (Vasiṣṭha) a prajapati, born of Brahma's breath
vasodhara (*vasodhārā*) "stream" or "shower of Vasu"
vastu purusha (*vastu puruṣa*) "person of the place"
Vasu a set of beneficent deities, including Adityas, Maruts, Ashvins, and others
Vasudeva (Vasudeva) father of Krishna the man, Devaki's husband (always identified in the text to distinguish from the following)
Vasudeva (Vāsudeva) Krishna as the son of Vasudeva; one of the vyuhas of God
Vasudha (Vasudhā) Goddess Earth, Sita's mother
Vasuki (Vāsuki) ruler of the nagas
Vasu Uparichara (Vasu Uparicara) king who hears the *Satvata Shastra* from Brihaspati
vatarashana (*vātaraśana*) "clothed in the wind"
Vatsara Year, ruler of Ketumala; son of Dhruva
Vayu (Vāyu) Air, Wind
Vedavada (Vedavāda) Doctrine of Veda
vedi (*vedī*) sacrificial altar
Vegavati River Kanchipuram was built at its confluence with the Palar River
Vehka (Veḥkā) Vishnu reclining
velvi (*vēḷvi*) (T) fire sacrifice
Vena "Inordinate Desire," "Longing," son of Anga, ruler who fell to purgatory
Venka (Veṅka) territory visited by Rishabha
Venkatam mountain, also called Tirumalai
veshavishishta (*veṣaviśiṣṭa*) distinguished in appearance
veshyastri (*veśyastrī*) courtesan
Vessantara bodhisattva known for giving
vetala (*vetāla*) vampire
vibhava transformation of forms; secondary emanation of God
Vibhavari (Vibhāvarī) city of Soma, the Moon, in the north

Vibhishana (Vibhīṣaṇa) Ravana's virtuous younger brother
vibhu (*vibhu*) omnipresent
Vibudha Krishna as the Learned One
vibhuti (*vibhūti*) occult powers; glorious realm
Vichitrachitta (Vicitracitta) king in South Arcot District
vidhi instructions
Vidisha (Vidiśā) region of Kosala, ruled by Shatrughati
Vidura (Vidūra) Kuru devotee who heard the Bhagavatam from Maitreya
Viduratha (Vidūratha) Dantavaktra's brother, ally of Shishupala et al.
vidyadhara (*vidyādhara*) "bearer of the knowledge of spells"
vighna obstable
Vighnaraja (Vighnarāja) "King of Obstacles," Ganesha
Vignesha (Vigneśa) "Ruler of Obstacles," Ganesha
vihara (*vihāra*) Buddhist monastery
Vijaya "Conquest"; guardian in Vaikuntha
Vijaya (Vijayā) wife of Kampavarman
vijayadvadashi (*vijayadvādaśī*) twelfth day of Shravana, called "victory"
vijayanti flower garland signifying victory
vijayashakti (*vijayaśakti*) Shakti in her mode as Victory
Vijitashva (Vijitāśva) title given Prithu's son when he recovers horse from Indra
vijnana (*vijñāna*) discriminative or subject-object consciousness
vikrama stride or step
vikritya (*vikṛtya*) transformation
Vikuntha (Vikuṇṭhā) wife of Shubhra, mother of Vaikuntha
villavan (*villavaṉ*) (T) "owner of the bow"
Villipputtur (Villipputtūr) (T) "Villi's New Town," south of Madurai, in poem by Kotai
vimana (*vimāna*) palace
vina (*vīṇā*) plucked string instrument
vinda rescuer
Vindhyavali (Vindhyāvali) the Vindhya mountain range; wife of Bali
vinoda play
vipra sage; (cap.) Krishna as seer
vipula great, extensive; translated by Dennis Hudson as "holy man"
Virabhadra (Vīrabhadra) "Distinguished Hero"; Anger, born of a hair from Shiva's head
viraj (*virāj*) "ruling far and wide"; the womb of Purusha
virakti indifference to worldly enjoyments
virat-purusha (*virat-puruṣa*) Vasudeva's fully differentiated state
Virochana (Virocana) "Illuminating"; son of Prahlada, father of Bali
virya (*vīrya*) prowess; ability to act without being affected by that action
visarga voiceless aspiration (in Sanskrit); Brahma's emanation of the universe
visha (*viṣa*) poison
Vishakhayupa (Viśakhayūpa) the "Effulgent One"; a place of pilgrimage
vishishta (*viśiṣṭa*) differentiated
vishnor dhama parama (*viṣnor dhāma parama*) "Pervading Actor's Supreme Home"

Vishnu (Viṣṇu) God as "pervading actor"
Vishnuchittan (Viṣṇucittan) (T) poet better known as Periyalvar
vishnugriha (*viṣṇugṛha*) "Emperor's Vishnu-house"
vishnuhasta (*viṣṇuhasta*) Krishna's (or acharya's) touch on the head that removes kalmasha
vishnupada (*viṣṇupada*) Visnu's realm
Vishnupada (Viṣṇupada) "Foot of Vishnu"; the four worlds beyond Dhruva
Vishnupaddam (Viṣṇupaddam) (T) the pole star beyond Dhruva
vishnusthala (*viṣṇusthala*) location of a Vishnu shrine
Vishnuyashas (Viṣṇuyaśas) Kalki will be born to him at the end of the Kali Yuga
Vishravas (Viśravas) sage, father of Ravana
Vishvadeva (Viśvadeva) one of the Universal Principles
vishvajita (*viśvajīta*) all-conquering
Vishvakarma (Viśvakarma) a prajapati, son of Bhuvana
Vishvaksena (Viśvaksena) attendant of Bhagavan, as he protects Lokaloka
vishvam (*viśvam*) fullness; the universe
Vishvamitra (Viśvāmitra) "Friend to All"; one of the Seven Seers
Vishvarupa (Viśvarūpa) asura slain by Indra
Vishvasphurji (Viśvasphūrji) ruler of Magadha, probably Chandra Gupta II
Vishveshvara (Viśveśvara) "Ruler of All"; Surya
vishveshvara-ananta (*viśveśvara-ananta*) "endless ruler of everything"
vitai (*viṭai*) (T) bull
vitam (*viṭam*) (T) poison (Skt. visha)
Vitashoka (Vītaśoka) King Ashoka's brother
vitavel-koti-verpatai (*viṭavēl-koṭi-vēṟpaṭai*) (T) "the banner of the khatvanga spine of bones"
vitelvituku (*viṭēlviṭuku*), vitelvitukennuntiruvanai natavi (*viṭēlviṭukeṉṉuntiruvāṇai naṭāvi*) (T) oath Pallavamalla took during his unction
Vitelvituku (Viṭelviṭuku) Pallava (T) title of Nandivarman, first Pallava ruler
Vitihotra (Vītihotra) son of Priyavrata, father of Ramanaka and Dhataki
vittam (*viṭṭam*) (T) crossbeam, anything put across; the body
Vivasvat the Sun, who taught Manu
viveka discrimination
Vraja area near Mathura, Krishna's home in his childhood and youth
vrata vowed discipline
Vrindavana (Vṛndāvana) "Vrinda's forest", area or town along the Yamuna River in Vraja
vrishaba-lanchana (*vṛṣaba-lāñcana*) bull crest
vrishadhvaja (*vṛṣadhvaja*) flag with bull emblem
Vrishakapi (Vṛṣākapi), "Virile Ape"; friend of Indra in *Rig Veda*
vrishanka (*vṛṣānka*) bull emblem
Vrishni (Vṛṣṇi) one of the set of clans to which Krishna belongs
Vritra (Vṛtra) "Restrainer"; demon-magician battled by Indra
vyana (*vyāna*) breath inhaled through the mouth to permeate the whole body
Vyasa (Vyāsa) "Compiler"; sage, attributive author of the *Bhagavata Purana*
Vyasa Dvaipayana (Vyāsa Dvaipayana) first priest at Yudhisthira's rajasuya

Vyoma asura in the shape of a cowherd boy
vyuha (*vyūha*) "a collection"; emanation, formation of God
vyuha-antara (*vyūha-antara*) (material forms) interior to formations (of God)
Yadava (Yādava) one of the set of clans to which Krishna belongs
Yadu king, founder of Yadavas
yaga (*yāga*) offerings
yajamana (*yajamāna*) sponsor of a sacrifice
yajanti vedatantrabhyam (*yajanti vedatantrābhyām*) "They who sacrifice through Veda and Tantra"; rites of Veda and Tantra
yajna (*yajña*) sacrifice
Yajnapurusha (Yajñapuruṣa) Person of the Sacrfice, Sacrifice as Person
Yajnavalkya (Yājñavalkya) sage
Yajur Veda Veda containing liturgy for rituals and sacrifices
yajus particular mantras uttered in a particular manner at a sacrifice
yaksha (*yakṣa*) demigod, attendant of Kubera
yama (*yāma*) restraint; disciplined way of life
Yama ruler of the realm of the dead
Yamuna (Yamunā) a river associated with Krishna, and its goddess
Yapaniya Sangha (Yāpanīya Sangha) Jain sect of the Western Gangas, also called Yavanika Sangha
Yashoda (Yaśodā) Krishna's mother in Vraja, Nanda's wife
Yavana "Greeks"; people to the northwest
Yayati (Yayāti) dynasty ruling beyond Aryavarta
yoga unified consciousness; the fifth rite of the day for Vaishnavas
Yogadesha (*yogādeśa*) prayer taught by Shiva
yogamaya (*yogamāyā*) creative power of God's unified consciousness; (cap.) goddess embodying Krishna's creative power
yoganidra (*yoganidrā*) "Sleep of Unified Consciousness"
Yogavid Vishnu as the Knower of Yoga
yogesha (*yogeśa*) Ruler of Unified Consciousness
Yogeshvaro Harih (Yogeśvaro Hariḥ) Hari as the Ruler of Yoga
yogin practitioner of yoga
yojana distance traversed by an oxcart in a day, about seven to nine miles
yoni womb
Yudhishthira (Yudhiṣṭhira) one of the Pandava brothers
yupa (*yūpa*) stake to which sacrificial animal is tied
yuvakumara (*yuvakumāra*) young prince
Yuvanashva (Yuvanāśva) "Young Horse"; father of Mandhata
yuvaraja (*yuvarāja*) junior ruler

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Index

Note: *f* indicates illustration